

**WHAT IS THE CULTURAL WEB OF AN ACADEMY? AN
INVESTIGATION INTO ONE ACADEMY'S ORGANISATIONAL
CULTURE**

by

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ABSTRACT

Academies may represent one of the most significant British educational reforms in recent history. However in reviewing the current research, little consideration has been given to investigating the culture of academies and acknowledging the significant role this can have in judging their effectiveness. One method of examining an organisation's culture is the cultural web model and it was subsequently the purpose of this thesis is to assess this model, as a tool for analysing an academy's culture. In order to achieve this, a complementary mixed-method case study approach was utilised for the teaching and non-teaching staff at an academy. This included questionnaires to Staff with No Responsibility (SNR), focus groups on Staff with Management Responsibility (SMR) and interviews with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Findings from this research successfully demonstrate the model's ability to offer valuable insight into an academy's culture as well as identifying a number of suggestions for improvement to its practice. This has also been supplemented with a new method for selecting an organisational culture model and modifications to the future deployment of the cultural web, for both a generic and education setting. Consequently, this thesis may be valuable to those practitioners wishing to analyse the culture of other academies and organisations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSF – Building Schools for the Future

CPD – Continued Professional Development

DfE – Department for Education

ESF – Emmanuel Schools Foundation

F – Focus Group

HoD – Head of Department

I – Interview

NT – Non-teaching

NTI – Notice to Improve

NUT – National Union of Teachers

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

Q – Questionnaire

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

SMR – Staff with Management Responsibility

SNR – Staff with No Responsibility

T – Teaching

TES – Times Educational Supplement

TUPE – Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Rationale

The Academies Act (2010) invited all schools in England and Wales to become academies and presented thousands of schools with the opportunity of being removed from local authority control. Consequently, Gunter (2011) asserts this may represent one of the most significant British educational reforms of recent history and the merits of why they warrant further study. However in examining the current research, whilst there is a growing body of work on the impact academies have to attainment and pupil learning (the National Audit Office, 2006; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007; Sammons, 2008; Gorard, 2009, Gorard, 2014; Andrews, 2016), there has been less focus on investigating their culture and working practices. This is agreed by Wilkins (2015) who contends that there has been little examination of the cultures that have developed in academies. Davies and Davies (2010) also earlier conclude that investigating the culture of academies may be vital, especially in assessing their long term sustainability. As such, it was the aim of this research to address this knowledge gap by offering an investigation of the organisational culture of an academy. This thesis therefore offers a distinct perspective, rather than solely analysing attainment data it provides the lived experiences of staff, following the transformation of the school to an academy.

In order to complete this study and investigate the culture of academies, there are a number of different methods that could be applied. Having completed some preliminary reading of appropriate literature, the cultural web model (Johnson and Scholes, 1999) was identified as an endorsed model which, although was developed primarily for businesses, is particularly effective at understanding an organisation's culture and identifying any changes needed for

organisational improvement (Sun, 2008). This business model may also be of particular use in examining academies, as a number are run by sponsors with business interests and these may ultimately be seen as business organisations (Hatcher, 2008). Consequently, it was also the intention to consider the cultural web model as a tool for meeting the aim of this thesis, of assessing the organisational culture of an academy. Thus, in addition to understanding the culture of academies, this research also seeks to establish an effective method of assessing an academy's culture. This may begin to aid other practitioners, wishing to consider such a method for their organisation.

1.2 Research Questions

In completing this study an extensive literature review was undertaken and this will be discussed further in chapter two. As previously noted, a dearth of literature was identified in relation to the examination of academies and their culture (Wilkins, 2015). This was also replicated when exploring academies and culture change. In once again highlighting this knowledge gap, this study attempts to apply the concepts of organisational culture in relation to academies and begins to fill this void. This is achieved by discussing the abundance of business management literature in relation to a specific academy context, however where possible educational management literature was also utilised. After completing the literature review, the following three research questions were generated:

- **Research question one:** what is the most appropriate method for exploring organisational culture change in the Academy?
- **Research question two:** do different stakeholders share the same perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy?
- **Research question three:** what are the Academy's organisational culture targets for whole school development to ensure long term sustainability?

1.3 Aim and Methods

In answering the three research questions, this study aims to explore the organisational culture of an academy. In order to address this aim, an embedded qualitative case study (Yin, 1994) was utilised, with a complementary mixed method approach (Flick, 2009), and this is discussed in more detail in chapter three. Additionally, in order to offer comparison of different hierarchical levels, the following research methods were employed:

- Questionnaires administered to **Staff with No Responsibility (SNR)**.
- Focus groups held with **Staff with Management Responsibility (SMR)**.
- Interviews with members of the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**.

These three strategies were considered important since the literature review also highlighted that a number of assessments of organisational culture assume the existence of a monoculture and therefore do not consider the cultural impact of different hierarchical groups (Lancaster and Di Millia, 2015; van Marrewijk, 2016). The sample population was also stratified between both **teaching** and **non-teaching** staff, in order to make comparisons possible between these two groups. The decision to include both staff groups was made in order to gain a more complete and holistic view of the Academy's culture. Particularly, since the literature review highlighted that non-teaching staff fulfil a key part of examining an educational institution's culture and a wealth of studies often neglect them in their research (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001; Bush and Middlewood, 2013).

1.4 The Research Context – the Academy

The Academy, a former comprehensive situated in the Midlands, converted in 2010 and has approximately 1200 pupils (aged 11 to 18 years old). The Academy's Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) report (2012) details that two fifths of

students are entitled for pupil premium funds (additional government money for pupils who have been eligible for free school meals in the last 6 years) and a similar number are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is above the national average. The Academy has three sponsors; two from local businesses and the main sponsor which is a Midlands based education Foundation. The Foundation represents the majority of governors at the Academy (including the Chair of Governors) and occupies the lead sponsorship role. It also has a number of independent (fee paying) and grammar schools (selective by means of an 11+ entrance exam) in its network. However the Academy is considered unique, since it is the only one of the schools in the network that is non-selective and non-fee paying.

The wider context of this study is the academy sector, which differs to schools from the state maintained sector. In discussing their inception, academies were launched in 2000 as a means of transforming education (Armstrong *et al.*, 2009). They were argued to be necessary in order to complement and counter balance the Specialist Schools programme which gave extra funding to schools with reasonable standards of achievement, so that they could specialise in a certain curriculum area. Thus academies were seen as providing similar opportunities to ‘failing schools’ that did not have such ‘reasonable’ achievement (Gorard, 2009). In exploring the key differences between academies and state community schools, Gorard (2009) notes academies are independent of local authority control (as unlike state schools they are funded by the government and not the local authority), have voluntary or private sector sponsors, have a specialist curriculum and could select 10% of their intake on aptitude. In addition to this, academies may have innovative approaches to one or more of governance, staffing structures, staff pay, teaching and learning, structure of the school day and year, and using information and communication technology (Astle & Ryan, 2008, cited Armstrong *et al.*, 2009). These issues will be explored further at the start of chapter two. However it is

important that these differences are acknowledged from the onset of this study, as they not only highlight how academies differ from comprehensive schools but also provide an understanding of some of the factors which influence their culture.

1.5 The Conceptual Framework - the cultural web

Following the selection of the Academy, a framework was used to examine its organisational culture. Instead of using a theoretical framework, a conceptual model will form the framework for this thesis. As previously discussed the framework that has influenced my investigation and shaped the development of this research project was the cultural web model. In offering some elaboration on the model (see figure 1 below), it was presented by Johnson (1988), in a paper on incremental strategic management, as a model for visualising the cultural paradigm of an organisation. Johnson (1988, p.84) described the paradigm as: “the set of beliefs and assumptions, held relatively common through the organization, taken for granted, and discernible in the stories and explanations of the managers”. The model is discussed further in chapter two, however both Mullins (2005) and Kemp (2005) contend that this paradigm is particularly useful in the analysis of an organisation’s culture. Moreover, Sun (2008) avers that it is useful for both identifying the culture of an organisation, as well as developing strategy, because its seven elements are key areas of culture change. Consequently, the cultural web has been employed by a number of academics (Heracleous and Langham, 1996; Hill and McNulty, 1998; Kemp and Dwyer, 2001; Heracleous, 2001; Kemp 2005; Losekut *et al.*, 2008) and this illustrates the value attributed to the model by other researchers. However it has yet to be applied to an academy setting and subsequently this thesis offers a procedure on how this model can be deployed in an academy as well as consideration of any modifications needed for its further development.

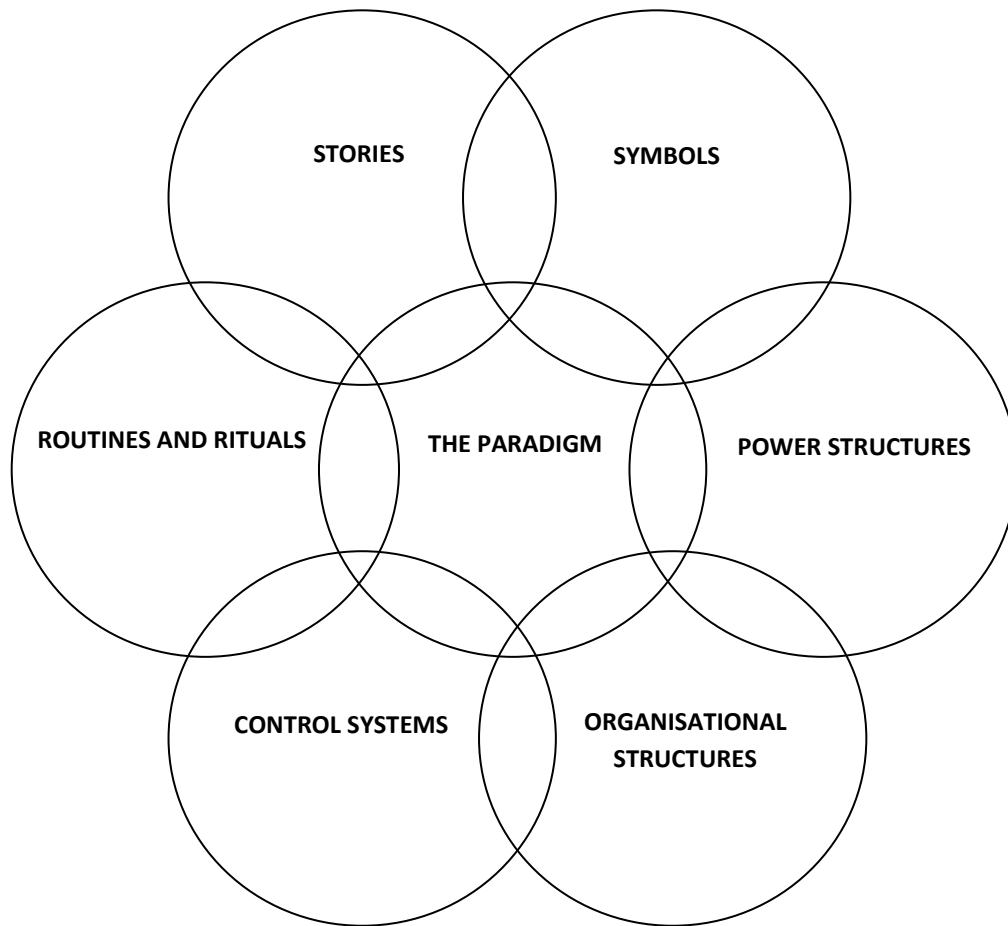


Figure 1 - Cultural Web (Johnson and Scholes, 2001, p. 301)

1.6 The Researcher's Changing Position

I am a teacher at the Academy, which forms the focus for this study. Whilst my role as an insider researcher is examined in more detail in chapter three, my position needs to be highlighted at the start of this research, since it is not only a major force behind initiating this research but it has also shaped my understanding and may explain any possible bias. Indeed, my teaching role has changed; for instance, when I began my doctorate I was a Head of Department for Media Studies and had little direct management over other staff in the Academy. However I have since been fortunate enough to have gained two promotions. The first was to Leader of ICT Development and Innovation, which included responsibility for the strategic management of the ICT for the Academy's new build. The second was to Assistant

Vice Principal with responsibility for the Academy's Sixth Form. This has seen my profile rise in the Academy and my role in managing staff increase. It is therefore acknowledged that this may have had an impact upon the participants' willingness to respond openly to interviews, as I am now a part of the Senior Leadership Team and therefore management of the school. Equally my perception of the Academy's management may have changed, as I am part of the team making management decisions. I may therefore have more sympathy and understanding of these management decisions than when I was Head of Media Studies. In summary of this issue, Moyles (2007) posits that bias and prejudice is difficult to avoid, particularly for managers researching their own organisation's culture and who may find their own personal likes and dislikes surfacing. Thus, it is important to reveal at the start of this thesis any bias which may have impacted the findings of this research (Altrichter *et al.*, 2008). I therefore acknowledge that my understanding of the Academy's culture and any potential bias may have also altered with the changes to my job role. However, it is also noted that throughout this study I have been mindful to adopt the role of a researcher, rather than as a manager; making it clear to my participants that I am conducting research and not evaluating their individual work practices.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

In summary of this introduction chapter, the structure of the rest of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 2: a discussion of the literature and conceptual framework which underpins this thesis. This includes an examination of organisational culture and change literature in relation to the Academy context.

Chapter 3: a discussion of the research design and methodology, including an exploration of the primary research methods and the sampling technique utilised.

Chapter 4: a description of the findings of this study, which are discussed in detail and conclude with the newly established cultural web of the Academy.

Chapter 5: a discussion of the findings of this research in relation to the underpinning theory and literature. This results in the identification of targets for suggested improvement to the Academy's organisational culture.

Chapter 6: a summary of the study and recommendations for future research, including reflections on the studies success and modifications to the cultural web for future deployment.

CHAPTER 2 – THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

“...state of conceptual chaos” (Martin, 1992, p.14).

The literature associated with organisational culture is extensive, complex and fraught with obscurities, contradictions and ambiguities (Brown, 1998). It is therefore the purpose of this review to facilitate a greater understanding of organisational culture by reviewing the associated literature and then contextualising the concept in relation to academy schools. Consequently, key texts and studies in this field which have contributed to our understanding and development of the concept have been thoroughly reviewed by this researcher. In order to achieve this, searches were conducted from three main sources: the university library, academic journals/books, government reports and literature from relevant agencies. The search terms were focused upon keywords, topics, titles and authors in relation to ‘organisational culture’, ‘organisational culture change’ and ‘academies’. However, whilst a plethora of literature could be obtained on each individual topic, there were limited returns on organisational culture and change in relation to academies. In order to improve returns, the search was widened from ‘academies’ to ‘education’ and thus enabled for other educational institutions to be considered, such as schools, colleges and universities. Whilst this helped improve returns, it is noted that there is a greater abundance of literature on organisational culture and change in relation to business management, when compared to education management. This perhaps originates from the fact that organisational culture and change is most often associated with the business management field and is discussed in relation to business organisations. It is therefore recognised that this review has drawn from the wider field of business management, however where possible education management literature is utilised.

In next discussing the literature review process, it is not within the scope of this review to offer an in-depth analysis of academy schools, however in order to contextualise the organisation the first phase of this review will provide a brief overview of the literature on academies, including their historical and political context. The second phases will examine the definitions, perspectives and components of organisational culture. This will aid in establishing the theoretical foundation for this study and assists in situating the concept for the Academy context. The third phase of this chapter will consider a method of changing organisational culture and the selection of an appropriate and justifiable method for the Academy context. Completing these three phases contributes towards answering research question one: what is the most appropriate method for exploring organisational culture change in the Academy?

2.2 Academies

Academies were launched in 2000 by David Blunkett, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills. They were presented as a means of transforming education by replacing those schools in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and with failing results (Armstrong *et al.*, 2009). Originally named City Academies, Astle & Ryan (2008) note academies are funded by the government rather than the local authority and enable their leadership teams to have greater managerial freedoms. For instance academies can have innovative approaches to one or more of governance, staffing structures, staff pay, teaching and learning, curriculum, structure of the school day and year. Academies could also receive additional funding by applying for specialist status in a subject area (although private sector sponsorship was also needed) and could also select 10% of their intake based on aptitude in their specialism (Gorard, 2009). However Curtis (2009) espouses that some of these freedoms were not unique and could already be found in other school types, such as specialist schools

and City Technology Colleges which respectively have specialisms and sponsors. Armstrong *et al.* (2009) also query the distinctiveness of academies, since some legislation, such as exclusions, actually binds academies as though they are local authority schools; both are also inspected by Ofsted. A key aspect of academies was also the £25million investment from central government in order to fund a new building (under the Building Schools for the Future Programme - BSF) and the transfer of local authority owned land and buildings to the academy (Tomlinson, 2001). However Sinnott (2008) identified that there was some opposition to the transfer of publically funded assets into the hands of unaccountable sponsoring bodies, who are not required to have educational expertise or experience. In furthering this discussion, Bates (2013) contends that academies were meant to be perceived as a partnership between government and private businesses, with the sponsor also having to invest £2 million. Furthermore, since academies are removed from the jurisdiction of the local authority, the school governing body may be considered more accountable (Francis, 2015). Whilst Kaukoa and Salokangas (2015) highlight additional incentives created by the removal of local authority control, such as extra budget; as academies receive funds to cover the costs of services which were previously provided by the local authority.

In terms of the rationale for academies, Bartlett and Burton (2012) note that they operated under the assumption that if a failing school is closed and replaced with a new school, new approach, sponsor and expertise, then underachievement could be addressed. This is furthered by Andrews (2016) who states that academies were seen as a method of improving education outcomes by taking failing schools out of local authority control and operating under a model similar to that of private schools. However, earlier Curtis *et al.* (2008) query some of the methods utilised by academies for addressing underachievement, for instance the high exclusion rates which in some cases have been greater than neighbouring schools. Whilst,

Ward and Eden (2009) contend that many of the failing schools which were chosen to become academies were not actually failing at the time of closure. Additionally, Gorard (2009) argues that the first three academies that opened in 2002 did not outperform the schools they had replaced and furthermore there is no clear evidence that academies produce better results than local authority schools with equivalent intakes. This was later reaffirmed by Gorard (2014), whom, when analysing figures from the Annual Schools Census 1989–2012, the Department for Education School Performance Tables 2004–2012 and the National Pupil Database, found no convincing evidence that academies are any more (or less) effective than the schools they replace. Despite these factors Gunter and McGinity (2014) outline that the Academies programme developed incrementally over the next decade. This is agreed by Walford (2014) who counts that by the end of Tony Blair’s term there were 83 academies open and a further 400 planned by 2010. In offering some elaboration for this proliferation, Gunter and McGinity (2014) suggest the Academies Programme was firmly grounded in the politics of New Labour’s election campaign and the mandate to offer something ‘new’ in the provision of educational services. This is continued by Barker and Hoskins (2015) who advocate that, despite the lack of consistent evidence, academies became New Labour’s preferred solution for addressing poor examination results in disadvantaged areas.

2.2.1 The Academies Act (2010)

“...an explosion in academy numbers and proliferation of academy types since 2010, which has meant that... the status now appears irreversible” (Francis, 2015, pp.437-438).

Academies were brought into prominence once again with the Education Bill in 2010, from the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government. This Bill contained Michael Gove’s (then Secretary of State for Education) invitation for both primary and secondary

schools to be given the opportunity to become academies. As a result the Academies Act (2010) was passed, extending to England and Wales only, and included pre-approving schools rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted and removing the requirement for academies to consult the local authority before opening. 'Failing' schools were still expected to academise, but under the support of a sponsor such as an 'academy chain' or 'high performing' school. Furthermore, 'failing schools' that refused to consider academy status could be forced to become academies (Stevenson, 2016). In discussing the sponsorship of academies, Adonis (2012) argues that successful private schools should provide further credence to their charitable status by sponsoring academies. However Gibson and Bisschoff (2014) note this idea is based on the debatable notion that elitist schools which may be fee-paying or contain entry tests, can assist schools which contain neither of these admittance criteria. Whilst further changes in the Academies Programme included significant reductions to the financial incentives which ended the opportunity for a new school building and limited the start-up fund to just £25,000 (Leo *et al.*, 2010). West and Bailey (2013) also highlight that the austerity programme implemented by the coalition government in 2010, included the abolition of specialist status and the ability to select 10% of the intake based upon aptitude. Finally, two additional types of academies were also introduced in addition to converter schools. The first were 'Free Schools' which are new schools that are set up by sponsors such as parents or religious groups. The second were 'University Technical Colleges' for 14–19 year olds, which are established by universities and employers (West and Bailey, 2013).

In assessing these changes, Bartlett and Burton contend (2012) this represents a stark contrast between Labour's academies, which had more investment and focused on replacing 'failing' schools. Compared to the Academies Programme put forward by the Coalitions government, which focused on less investment and providing more autonomy to all schools. Additional

amendments were also made in November 2010, when the fast tracking of academy status was extended to those schools classified as ‘good’ but with ‘outstanding’ features. Thus, although Rogers (2012) highlights there has been a growth in the number of chains of sponsored academies, most academies are now converter schools. Indeed Gibson (2015) concludes that as of 2014, 2818 out of the 3923 academies in England are now converter schools rather than sponsored academies. However West and Bailey (2013) earlier argue that the reason for such a high number of schools seeking to convert is more likely to relate to concerns about cuts to schools budgets, associated with the Coalition Government’s austerity measures; since academies receive additional funds to cover the cost of services provided by the local authority. In summary, Francis (2015) argues that these changes have diluted the impact and distinctiveness of academies since most converters have continued in much the same way as they did before academisation, with some not even altering their school name. Stevenson (2016) also highlights that whilst proponents of academisation highlight the advantages of autonomy and choice, concerns still remain with regard to the increased influence of the private sector on public sector education. Indeed, Andrews (2016) suggests there is considerable doubt over the government’s policy of academising schools, since the average performance of pupils in academy groups is similar to that in local authorities. It is therefore more important to consider if a child is in a high performing school, regardless of whether it is an academy school or a local authority school. A consequence of this is earlier highlighted by Wilkins (2015), who notes that critics may therefore argue that academies do not address issues of social mobility, since middle class parents will continue to ensure their children are admitted to the most desirable and successful schools; for instance by moving within their catchment areas. Nonetheless, the new Conservative government’s support for the expansion of the Academies Programme remained clear with the release of the white paper ‘Education Excellence Everywhere’ in March 2016. This outlined the intention for all

schools in England to either convert to academies by 2020, or to have committed to converting by 2022; however following opposition from within the party these plans were abandoned. Having briefly established the context of academies, the next section will discuss the importance of organisational culture in understanding and assessing academies.

2.2.2 Linking Academies to Organisational Culture and Change

In first discussing the link between culture and schools, Glover and Coleman (2005) contend that the routes of this area of research may be traced back to studies in the 1960s and 1970s. However, more recently it has gained increasing importance in its role in organisational change and school effectiveness (Cheng, 1993). For instance, Weller (1998) contends that a school's culture can be a primary factor as to why some schools succeed in reform. Later Hopkins (2001) blames the failure of school improvement initiatives on ignoring the culture of a school. Whilst Horenczyk and Tatar (2002) suggest that the organisational culture of a school can be a key factor in understanding teacher attitudes and efficacy. In summary, Stoll (2003) concludes that changing a school's culture, to one which has more positive cultural norms, is an essential part of improving its effectiveness.

However, whilst there has been a growing body of work into the attainment of academies (National Audit Office, 2006; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007; Sammons, 2008; Gorard, 2009; Gorard, 2014; Andrews, 2016), the investigation of their culture has been lacking. This is agreed by Wilkins (2015) who contends that there has been little examination of the cultures that have developed in both sponsored and converter academies. In considering the importance of organisational culture, Bagali (2002) argues that it can have a huge affect on how one perceives and judges the effectiveness of an organisation. This is furthered by Dauber *et al.* (2012) who contend organisational culture has been recognised as an essential

factor in analysing organisations. Consequently, in order to gain a more thorough understanding and assessment of academies and their effectiveness, it is necessary to consider their organisational culture. This is agreed by Davies and Davies (2010) who conclude that investigating the culture of academies, such as their ability to develop leadership talent, may be vital in assessing their long term sustainability.

2.3 Organisational Culture

In attempting to investigate the culture of academies, Stevenson and Baker (2005) attest there is little agreement as to the best way of assessing organisational culture. This is agreed by Bellot (2011) who affirms that although there is some growing consensus, there is still considerable disagreement regarding its method of classification. However a starting point in addressing this issue, and beginning to answering research question one, is the attempt to define it. While this may sound relatively simple, the task is acknowledged as problematic with many academics recognising the difficulty in arriving at a universally accepted definition (Schein, 1992; van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2005; Stevenson and Baker, 2005; Lindahl, 2006; Bellot, 2011). Consequently, the next section explores the definitions of organisational culture.

2.3.1 Definitions of Organisational Culture

Reflecting on the term historically, both Hofstede *et al.* (1990) and Bellot (2011) identify that it was Pettigrew (1979) who was one of the first to employ the term. This was in the Administrative Science Quarterly and the concept incorporated a distinct anthropologic foundation (Bellot, 2011), with Pettigrew (1979, p.574) describing organisational culture as:

“the system of such publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group at a given time. This system of terms, forms, categories, and images, interprets a people's own situation to themselves”.

Whilst this definition may be useful in that it is a unitary one, it lacks deeper analytical substance and so was encompassed by five distinct concepts: symbols, language, ideology, rituals and myths. However these given concepts are not universally applicable and, as Pettigrew (1979) acknowledged, may only be valid in certain organisations. In the case of Pettigrew's study this was a British boarding school, which was founded by what he calls an “idiosyncratic” entrepreneur (1979, p.570); a context which does not apply to all boarding schools or organisations.

A familiar and often cited definition (Anthony, 1992; Johnson and Scholes, 1999; Bellot, 2011) is provided by Schein (1985, p.9) who defines organisational culture from a more social psychological perspective. He describes it as:

“a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems... and to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to problems”.

This definition is supported by Senior (2002) who praises it for its acknowledgement of assumptions. This is also endorsed by Mullins (2005), who argues that assumptions are vital in providing a definition of culture because it acknowledges the importance of common beliefs which are unconsciously taken for granted. Crucially, they express what people in the organisation believe to be true and false in the world. However Owens (2004) offers an opposing view and suggests that definitions of organisational culture must also include both

assumptions and norms. He describes assumptions as the commonly held and tacit beliefs which members of the organisation accept about what is possible and impossible, while he describes norms as the unwritten rules that express what behaviour is acceptable in order to be a member of the group. Earlier, Jaeger and Baliga (1985) also offer some agreement with Owens (2004) and argue that norms and values are necessary because the rules they offer can guide behaviour and make an organisation more effective. In exploring a definition that encompasses assumptions, norms and values, Kilmann *et al.* (1985, p.5) define organisational culture as the:

“shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and norms that knit a community together”.

However this definition lacks explanation on how these beliefs and norms coalesce into shared meaning and it is subsequently unclear how beliefs and norms would lead to a shared culture in the Academy. Further investigation is therefore needed in relation to how culture is defined and could be applied to the Academy context of this research.

2.3.2 Defining Culture for the Academy Context

In working towards a definition for the Academy context, Brown (1998) examined 14 definitions of culture and concluded that they all had a very different understanding of what culture is. He settled by offering the following definition:

“organisational culture refers to the patterns of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation’s history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviour of its members” (p.9).

This definition begins to incorporate the idea that beliefs and values develop from an organisation's history and perhaps provides some explanation of how a shared culture could be created in the Academy context. Owens (2004) reinforces this view and contends that as culture develops over time, it continues to acquire deeper and deeper meaning. Thus a new school might not have as 'deep' a culture when compared to a well established school. While the acknowledgement of an organisation's history to its culture may be useful, it still does not offer a convincing explanation as to the interaction between beliefs and norms. One definition which does bridge this gap is offered by Bush (2011, p.170):

“Beliefs, values and ideology are at the heart of organisations. Individuals hold certain ideas and value-preferences which influence how they behave and how they view the behaviour of other members. These norms become shared traditions which are communicated within the group and are reinforced by symbols and ritual.”

However in summary, Bush and Middlewood (2013) conclude that values and norms are the core components of culture. In an attempt to select a working definition Kra *et al.* (2011) reason that researchers should simply outline the operational definition for their research and context. This is also earlier confirmed by Brown (1998) who advocates that when no consensus has emerged on a definition, it is the researcher's responsibility to adopt or define their own.

In an attempt to complete the aforementioned, Pettigrew (1979) determines culture to be a system, Schein (1985) views it as an assumption and Bush (2011) suggests it is a product of the interaction between beliefs and norms. These different definitions and conceptions also highlight considerable variations in the perspectives of the theorists. This is agreed by Connolly *et al.* (2011) who contend that different ontological underpinnings of organisational

culture is a key factor in the complexity of the notion. Therefore, before a definition of organisational culture for the Academy context can be selected, a review is required of the different schools of thought which have influenced organisational culture. Yet, in offering some simplicity to this task, Chance and Chance (2002) conclude that organisational culture is merely a term to describe “the way things are done” in an organisation (p.21). Therefore, whichever definition is selected for this study (selected on p.23), this thesis is most concerned with endeavouring to describe the way things are done in the Academy.

2.4 Perspectives of Organisational Culture

In examining perspectives of culture, Knights and Willmott (2010) contend that there are two main streams and this is based on one’s epistemological approach to culture, which at its core may be either objectivist or interpretivist. This dichotomy is also agreed to be a key debate in the exploration of culture by a number of academics and researchers (Alvesson, 1993; Senior, 2002; Seng *et al.*, 2009). The objectivists perceive culture as a characteristic or independent variable, placed alongside such elements as the technology, structure, or the environment of the organisation (Senior, 2002). As such, organisations have culture and it is therefore an element that can be changed or manipulated. In essence this view is suggested to perceive culture as a management tool, ensuring employees direct their attention to the organisational goal (Knights and Willmott, 2010). This is also discussed by Alvesson (2002) who suggests that measuring culture objectively involves isolating and gathering data on how people relate to a specific value. In contrast, the interpretivists perceive culture as a metaphor for the concept of the organisation (Senior, 2002). Consequently, this view contends culture is not something an organisation has, but something an organisation is (Pacanowsky and O’Donnell-Trujillo, 1982). This view is agreed by Maull *et al.* (2001) who emphasise culture as a dependent variable, as they espouse it is the organisation itself producing the culture.

Therefore if an organisation's culture is to change, it is necessary to examine its members and their shared understanding of what the culture is perceived to be.

2.4.1 As an Independent versus Dependent Variable

In first exploring culture as an independent variable, Smircich (1983) discusses that this has its roots in comparative management studies, where culture is considered to be a background factor which is responsible for influencing developments and reinforcing beliefs. This is supported by Meek (1988), who explains that from this view culture is a force for social integration where culture is transferred from individual actors to the organisation as a whole. Senior (2002) notes that culture from this point of view can be a valuable tool for managers and can have a genuine impact on their thinking and organisational strategy. Fincham and Rhodes (2005) however disagree and highlight the notion that organisational culture is indeed manageable is contentious; cultures are rarely planned or predictable, instead they develop over time and evolve from countless events and social interactions. Whilst Smircich (1983) outlines that culture as either a dependent variable or metaphor, perceives the organisations themselves as culture producing phenomena. Research from this perspective is based on the systems theory framework and is concerned with a collection of variables that are necessary for organisational survival. As such, it requires a critical analysis of symbolic content in order to discover the culture of the organisation (Mohan, 1993). Knights and Wilmott (2010) contend that this perspective is closer to the original anthropological perspective of culture. Furthermore they argue that leaders do not create culture, rather it emerges from collective social interaction. It is therefore less concerned with pragmatic results that aid management but it is in favour of more general reflections and interpretations of organisations.

In summarising the dichotomy of culture as a variable or as a metaphor, Smircich (1983) contends that this whole debate can be attributed to the dichotomy between the two main foundations of organisational culture: the sociological (culture as an independent variable) and the anthropological (culture as a dependent variable/metaphor). This is also supported by Cameron and Quinn (2011) who then extend the idea and contend that the sociological perspective has come to dominate. Fincham and Rhodes (2005) earlier agree with this and suggest that the issue lies with the fact that culture was originally an anthropological term, referring to the customs of society and what makes one society different from another. It was only later that culture became a subjective tool, reflecting the meanings and understanding we attribute to situations and the solutions we apply. In reflecting on the two perspectives, Brown (1998) contends that there are considerable reservations in understanding culture as a metaphor. In particular, he emphasises that viewing culture as a metaphor means it cannot be translated into a precise language and therefore it is unlikely to be rigorously measured or tested. However Senior (2002) contrasts this view and supports the idea of culture as a metaphor, as it encourages a more in-depth analysis of culture. This is because it requires one to explore how culture is created and sustained and it therefore recognises the importance and impact of historical patterns on culture.

2.4.2 Operational Definition for the Academy Context

In working towards a definition for the Academy, Hargreaves (1995) advocates the exploration of school culture from an anthropological perspective (as a dependent variable), especially when explored through symbolism, as it can be a powerful analytical tool and a reality defining function. This is because by examining the reality-defining aspects of culture, it may be possible to detect the fundamental problems within an organisation. Thus by applying this symbolic paradigm with an interpretivist based perspective on the Academy, it

may be possible to identify fundamental organisational influences and problems. In identifying the foundation and perspective for this research, the operational definition of culture can then be applied. Bush's (2011) definition (on p.19), which was discussed earlier in this chapter and is from an educational base, has clear applicability to this research context and is therefore appropriate for this study. In identifying the definition of culture for this research, Brown (1998) notes they are often, by their very nature, concise and do not always explain the complexities and ambiguities which exist in organisational culture. This is continued by Zhu (2015) who stresses that organisational culture contains a number of multi-faceted characteristics and dimensions. In acknowledgement of this point, this review will next explore the various components of organisational culture.

2.5 Components of Organisational Culture

Mohan (1993) asserts that there are a wide range of shared components of organisational culture. This is also acknowledged by Brown (1998) who asserts that while many components may be described as distinct classes, there can be overlap between them. It is therefore not only necessary to discuss key components of culture, but to also identify any overlap that may exist between them. Consequently, the following sections will outline both components and overlap, in order to identify a set of components which can be employed for the Academy context of this study.

2.5.1 Symbols

Meek (1988) argues that symbols are the most commonly included component when examining organisational culture. In discussing symbols, she uses the term to denote the shared codes of meaning in an organisation, which encompass language, architecture and artefacts. Hofstede *et al.* (1990) agree on the importance of symbols when exploring

organisational culture, however they also offer more specifics and believe symbols to include words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning within a culture. Later, Brown (1998) offers similar support and advocates that symbols encompass the words, objects, conditions, acts or characteristics that signal something different or wider than themselves. This is agreed by Connolly *et al.* (2011) who suggest that symbols must be interpreted in order to grasp what they actually represent. For instance, a speech from a senior manager could be designed to symbolise their commitment to a particular policy or product. Despite the use of symbols in organisations, Stables (2010) advocates that educational theory has been slow in embracing the semiotic perspective which is evidenced in the amount of literature on the topic. In summary of symbols, unlike Meek (1988) who espouses that language, architecture and artefacts are all components of symbols, Brown (1998) argues they can also be separate. In recognition of this argument, language, architecture and artefacts will now be explored in more detail.

2.5.2 Language

First in exploring language, Brown (1998) contends that it is not merely a means of communication but is fundamental in determining how we understand the world. For example different organisations may have specific terminology which can mean different things depending upon the organisational culture. Examples include ‘good service’, ‘high quality’ and ‘excellence’, which Schein (1985) notes can have vastly different meanings. Whilst in relation to the language of teaching and learning, Hopkins (2001) discusses the importance of a common consensus of the basic terminology concerning pupil achievement. More recently Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) also agree on the importance of language to organisational culture and advocate that even slogans can be an important part of language.

This is because they can signal what the company stands for, although it assumes that the message is shared amongst all organisational members.

2.5.3 Architecture

In reviewing architecture, Brown (1998) suggests architecture is having an increasing impact on culture, particularly since organisations are often judged by their appearance and are frequently designed to convey a highly specific message. For instance, Wild (2011) discusses Foucault's (1977) utilisation of Bentham's Panopticon (a design for a prison where the cells are situated around a central observation point). She suggests that schools can be designed with a similar approach to the Panopticon, which aim to keep staff and students under observation. Whilst in considering classrooms, Earthman and Lemasters (2009), who examined 11 schools, found that teachers in unsatisfactory classrooms (such as having graffiti, ceiling leaks and poor lighting) felt frustrated and neglected to such an extent they sometimes reported they were willing to leave the teaching profession. This is continued by Barrett *et al.* (2015) who examined 153 classrooms in 27 schools and identified seven key design parameters which can adversely impact pupil academic progress: light, temperature, air quality, ownership, flexibility, complexity and colour.

2.5.4 Artefacts, Values and Basic Assumptions

In discussing artefacts, these are the most visible manifestations of an organisation's culture. Mohan (1993) suggests that artefacts can be divided into two categories: verbal artefacts which include languages, stories, myths and behavioural artefacts which include rituals and ceremonies. This explanation differs from Brown (1998) in that language is not a separate element of organisational culture, but is an example of an artefact. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2005) offer a similar list to Mohan (1993) which includes rituals, traditions, symbols, heroes

and heroines, stories, and ceremonies. While Knights and Willmott (2010) offer a comparable list which includes the type of people, traditions and rituals, technology, architecture, logos, heroes, myths, and so on. However again in this description, architecture is not a separate component of organisational culture, but is an example of an artefact. In examining these differences, Brown (1998) concludes that there is a vast array of different types and forms of artefacts and therefore one researcher's classification systems may differ greatly from another. This may make comparisons between different classification systems problematic. Nonetheless, Thomas *et al.* (2013) notes that artefacts, values and assumptions are a key aspect of an organisation and it is imperative educational leaders acknowledge these when creating a vision for change and improvement.

2.5.5 Norms

In examining other components of culture, Cunliffe (2008) discusses three further components. First considered are norms, or unwritten rules which guide behaviour. The importance of norms was identified earlier in this chapter when exploring the definition of organisational culture. Essentially, norms dictate the rules for behaviour and what is considered to be appropriate and inappropriate for a member of the organisation (Brown, 1998). The significance of norms is identified by Kilman *et al.* (1985), who advocate that this dimension ensures culture is more easily controlled since it outlines the desired behaviour from employees. This is supported by Alvesson (1993) who argues that because norms guide behaviour and attitudes they can have a powerful influence on the requirements for success. They can, for instance, have an effect on the quality, efficiency, reliability and innovation of the organisation. This is agreed by Stoll (2003) who contends that norms are an essential part of a school's culture and influence improvement, it is therefore important for those working in a school to understand their norms and assess how much they facilitate desired behaviours.

2.5.6 Stories

Next in Cunliffe's (2008) components of culture is the language used and stories told by organisational members. Brown (1998) in fact contends that stories are recognised as an integral part of organisational life because they influence other people's understanding of situations and events. This is supported by Johnson and Scholes (1999) who suggest that stories embed the organisational history and flag up important events and personalities. This is also more recently acknowledged by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) who advocate that stories circulate in an organisation and give clues about how to think and act in various circumstances. An educational example is provided by Christensen (2013) who suggests that the staff room is used by established teachers to tell stories and provide cultural codes to newcomers so that they may traverse the micro politics of the school. This is furthered by Choi *et al.* (2016) who note that online forums can also be used to share stories and aid in the professional development of teachers.

2.5.7 Rites and Ceremonies

The last of Cunliffe's (2008) components are rites and ceremonies, which are the common ways of acting and dressing. Earlier, Brown (1998) discusses ceremonies as celebrations of organisational culture or collective acts of cultural worship which reinforce cultural values. As they are acts of celebration and are often extravagant, they can be the most vivid and memorable acts for employees of the organisation. While rites and rituals are deemed by Beyer and Trice (1988) to be relatively elaborate and planned activities that consolidate cultural expression. They include training programmes, use of external consultants and employee opinion surveys, all of which are usually for the benefit of organisational members. This is supported by Brown (1998) who argues that rites and rituals are important, not only

for the message it communicates to those that participate, but also for the power it exercises over them. This is because they structure our understanding of how the organisation works and outline what is acceptable behaviour. In summary, Rud and Garrison (2010) contend that rituals and ceremonies can be important in creating a reverent culture which unites a school by creating mutual respect. Chappell *et al.* (2011) also add to this discussion and suggest photographing and displaying images of previous rituals and ceremonies in a school can help construct and maintain desired values and beliefs.

2.5.8 Heroes and Heroines

Bush and Middlewood (2013) discuss one other component of culture; heroes and heroines, which is described as those who personify the values and beliefs of the organisation. Deal and Kennedy (1982) earlier discuss the hero as the motivator who will be counted on when things get 'tough'. This is also identified by Hofstede *et al.* (1990), who suggest that heroes possess characteristics highly prized in the culture and can be alive or dead, real or imaginary.

However there is little further explanation provided by Hofstede *et al.* (1990) as to what these highly prized characteristics might be and therefore further clarity is needed. In discussing the dangers of heroes, Wilkins *et al.* (1990) warn that they may in fact value personal gain over team work. For instance a member of the organisation may be so concerned with becoming a hero, that they stop appreciating the benefits of group co-operation. Furthermore Moxnes (2013) warns that relying upon a hero is no guarantee that they will have any impact on corporate performance. This is agreed by Ishimaru (2013) who suggests that although the idea of the hero leader is a powerful metaphor in education there should be a move to towards distributed leadership which can result in greater collaboration and more successful schools.

2.5.9 Selecting Components for the Academy Context

In summary, from this exploration of organisational culture components and working towards addressing research question one, it is clear that there is significant variation in the attempts to identify key components of organisational culture. This is supported by Brown (1998) who contends that a large number of different elements have been identified by theorists. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2007) later concur and argue that there are a number of different ways organisational culture can be viewed and while some authors perceive certain components to be inclusive of another (for instance symbols includes language, architecture and artefacts), others perceive them as separate. This demonstrates the degree of overlap that exists between different components of organisational culture.

In identifying some common components for this research, Swanepoel (2003) notes that, at its core, organisational culture may merely consist of two components: the tangible and the intangible. This is supported by van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2005) who describe the intangible as the common values, assumptions, norms, and convictions that guide behaviour. In contrast the tangible are described as the observable, visible, and concrete elements of an organisational culture, which include artefacts such as rituals, traditions, symbols, heroes and heroines, stories, and ceremonies. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2007) also suggests that there has been a gradual movement towards these two components being identified as the main elements of organisational culture. In discussing the components of culture, Lundberg (1990) suggests that this leads onto how we might measure and change it. Organisational change and its relationship to culture will therefore be discussed next.

2.6 Organisational Change

In discussing the importance of change, Hatch (1997) highlights that it has featured prominently in the history of organisational development. Fincham and Rhodes (2005) agree and attest that organisational change occupies a central place in studying organisations. Klarner *et al.* (2008) support this view and note that in the previous decades, organisational change has received increasing attention from management research and practice. In offering an explanation of the term, Cunliffe (2008) deems organisational change to be the process of moving from a current state to a desired state.

In exploring reasons why the focus on change has gathered momentum, the following quotation is presented:

“Without change we would wither and die” (Handy, 1999, p.291).

This quotation, whilst perhaps overly dramatic, encapsulates a concise reason for why organisational change is viewed with such importance. Handy is influential in the discussion of organisational change for contributing the book *Understanding Organisations* (1976) and an often referenced typology for changing organisational culture (Brown, 1998; Senior, 2002; Mullins, 2005). He contends that change is necessary in order for organisations to compete for power and resources and therefore to survive. Fincham and Rhodes (2005) agree that organisational change has become increasingly important as it is an essential attribute of organisational survival, particularly since we live in an increasingly competitive and globalising market.

2.6.1 Organisational Change and Culture

In assessing change through organisational culture, some authors warn that change through culture can be a complex and difficult task (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Fullan, 2001; Stool, 2003). However Schein (1992) attests that culture is still the key to understanding how organisations operate. This is supported by Tushman and O'Reilly III (1996) who contend that culture is still a crucial factor in helping companies adapt to new circumstances. In adding to this discussion, Fincham and Rhodes (2005) draw on the works of Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982), who were some of the first to discuss the importance of culture to organisations. They contend that if 'real' change is to occur in an organisation, rather than short lived or superficial change, then it will need to happen on a cultural level. Cameron and Quinn (2011) also note that many organisations fail to change because they do not address or acknowledge the importance of organisational culture.

2.6.2 Organisational Culture Change and the Academy Context

In exploring this type of change in relation to education, Fullan (2007) suggests that for schools to be effective their culture must be addressed so that the working environment actively supports change. This is earlier reaffirmed by Fullan and Watson (2000) who go so far as to advocate "that it is culture that is the primary agent of change" (p.460). Bush and Middlewood (2013) also support the exploration of change in schools through culture, since schools are social constructions. To conclude, Cucchiara *et al.* (2015) attest that the reason culture is a crucial aspect of school change is because it is a key component of a teacher's satisfaction, commitment and effectiveness. Change is therefore more likely to occur if the school's organisational culture is understood and utilised to increase organisational effectiveness. In agreement with these points, organisational culture is affirmed as the perspective of change that will be employed for the Academy context.

2.7 Method of Organisational Culture Change

In discussing change through culture, Hatch (1997) suggests that there are a number of models and approaches for organisational culture change. It is therefore necessary to establish which organisational culture change method is the most appropriate for this Academy context. This will aid in answering question one: what is the most appropriate method for exploring organisational culture change in the Academy? Discussion of the chosen research methods, which will support the application of the selected organisational change method, will take place in chapter three.

In discussing organisational change through culture, a number of authors (Brown, 1998; Hayes, 2001; Senior, 2002; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2008; Cameron and Green, 2009) indicate that a large range of methods have been formulated. A central issue however is the problem that no one method has achieved wide acceptance. Ashkanasay *et al.* (2000) note although the concept has been discussed within literature for decades, scholars still disagree on the best way to measure and therefore change it. However Ashkanasay *et al.* (2000) also reason that because organisational culture is such an all-encompassing topic it must be applied to a theory or framework. This is because a theory or framework has the advantage of offering deeper analytical explanation, as well as insight into how the organisational culture can be both measured and changed.

2.7.1 Typology versus Process-Orientated Models

In discussing strategies of adding a framework to organisational culture change, Lim (1995) suggests that this can be seen in organisational culture models. Furthermore he advocates that there are two conceptual extremes of culture change model classification: typology based

(which has its roots in objectivism), or process-orientated (which has its roots in interpretivism). Brown (1998) supports this and suggests that organisational culture models can be useful tools for organisational change. Later, Bush (2011) also reasons that cultural models have become increasingly significant in education as powerful analytical tools, because of their ability to provide a framework for analysis.

In discussing the two approaches of typology or process-orientated, for the typology based approach a certain type of culture is identified. At perhaps its simplest, Peters and Waterman (1982) discuss the notion of strong cultures and weak cultures, while latterly Senior (2002) contrasts the discussion of strong and weak cultures with the structural view of culture, which draws on other forms of expression for its typology. In using a typological method, the researcher can utilise a model to assess what type of culture the organisation is and change it to the type of culture it can be. The benefits of this method are highlighted by Hargreaves (2003) who contends that a typology based method can be useful for making simple judgements on a school's culture and effectiveness.

Wilson and Rosenfield (1990) on the other hand warn that organisational culture should not be outlined in a specific typology, as it is likely to affect all areas of the organisation. Senior (2002) furthers this argument and attests that in using such a typology based method, one is assuming that an organisation can fit neatly into the requirements of one typology or another. This links to the process-orientated approach, which contends that there is no preferred type of culture. For instance the cultural web model (Johnson and Scholes, 1993) seeks to cause a paradigm shift in the culture of an organisation, but does not have a particular type or selection of culture types in mind. However by having no preferred typology of organisational culture, Brown (1998) reasons that this may make comparisons between

different organisations more challenging. This is because one assessment of organisational culture may differ markedly from another. Further issues with this type of method are noted by Hargreaves (2003), who outlines that it can be difficult to apply to schools since they may be effective in some areas but not in others and it is therefore problematic to label them as one typology.

2.7.2 Handy's Four Types (typology based model)

In exploring the value of a typology based approach in more detail, Brown (1998) asserts this is useful because it provides a broad overview of the variations that exist between cultures. It may therefore be possible to compare one type of organisational culture to another and, while there are a great range of different typologies, one prominent example is offered by Handy (1999). He discusses four types of organisational cultures: the power culture (the power of the organisation rests with a single source and is disseminated out), the role culture (the organisation rests on the strengths of its methods), the task culture (the power lies across the organisation and is based on expertise rather than position or charisma) and the person culture (the individuals decide on their work allocation and have almost complete autonomy).

Other authors have their own unique terms for classifying cultural types. For instance Deal and Kennedy (1982) discuss the tough-guy, macho culture, the work hard/play hard culture, the bet-your company culture, and the process culture. Quinn and McGrath (1985) offer four different cultural types: the rational culture (market), the ideological culture (adhocracy), the consensual culture (clan) and the hierarchical culture (hierarchy). In summary, whilst it may be possible to superficially identify one organisation as a certain typology, Brown (1998) advocates that no organisation is likely to fit precisely into one and the reality is that organisations are too complex to be captured in this way. In recognising this, Senior (2002)

suggests that a process-orientated approach may be more effective at acknowledging the complexity of culture, in particular the number of characteristics that are linked to each other.

2.7.3 The Cultural Web (process-orientated model)

In exploring the process-orientated approach in more detail, Senior (2002) contends that a key model is the cultural web, as outlined by Johnson and Scholes (1999) (see figure 1). As this model is significant to the development of my own ideas and is highlighted as a key source by the authors used in this section, the next part of this review will discuss the cultural web model in more detail.

Mullins (2005) and Kemp (2005) recognise this model as being particularly useful in the analysis of an organisation's culture. Sun (2008) also accepts that this model is useful for both identifying the culture of an organisation, as well as developing strategy, because its seven elements are key areas of cultural change. This is supported by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) who note that the model is particularly useful as it offers a clear sequential process for initiating change. It can therefore be used both to identify the culture of the Academy, as well as for recommending a strategy for organisational culture change. In briefly exploring the history of the cultural web model, it was presented by Johnson (1988) in a paper on incremental strategic management, as a model for visualising the cultural paradigm of an organisation. The paradigm was described as:

“the set of beliefs and assumptions, held relatively common through the organization, taken for granted, and discernible in the stories and explanations of the managers”

(Johnson, 1988, p.84).

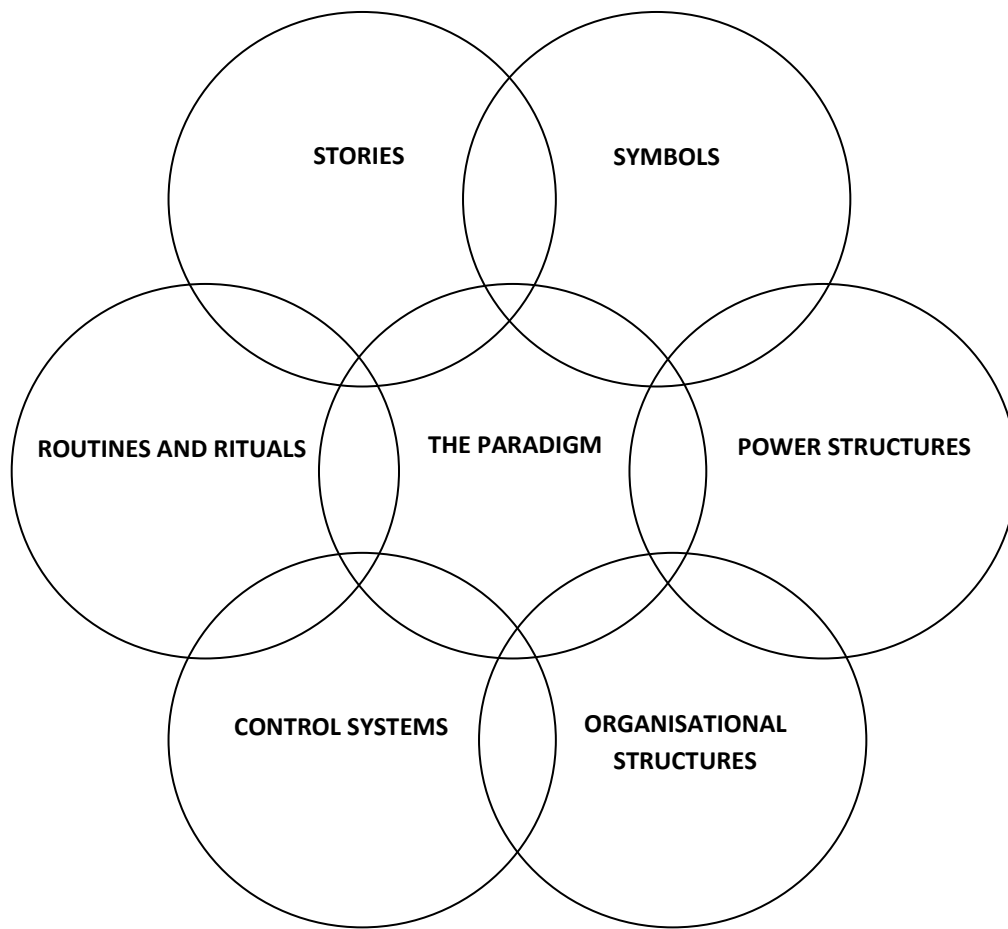


Figure 1 – Johnson and Scholes (1999) Cultural Web (p.301)

Johnson's (1988) paper explored organisational culture in relation to the key events of the organisation's history. The historical aspect of culture is noted as important, as it is suggested that organisational culture is part of a bigger historical pattern and therefore offers context for its conception (Chance and Chance, 2002; Senior, 2002). Thus if this model were to be employed for the Academy in this project, it may provide useful context as to how the organisational culture was formed. In offering a synopsis of the cultural web, its seven elements are explained in detail in appendix 1. Though to summarise the cultural web, all the different elements are argued to be somewhat of an obscure route for arriving at an organisation's culture. However Johnson and Scholes (1999) attest that this paradigm is

useful because it acknowledges the linkages between different elements and because organisational culture is so embedded in people's minds. This is supported by Losekut *et al.* (2008) who claim that because it is so embedded, people do not see its control on their actions or they may feel uncomfortable in admitting it. Whilst the cultural web has also been employed by a number of academics (Heracleous and Langham, 1996; Hill and McNulty, 1998; Kemp and Dwyer, 2001; Heracleous, 2001; Kemp 2005; Losekut *et al.*, 2008), Johnson (1992) warns of the impact of cultural constraints on using the model for organisational change; for instance political and ritualised behaviour may be barriers to its successful implementation. This is further discussed by Losekut *et al.* (2008) who advocate that in general, organisational change is perhaps more likely when the existing culture has failed. This is because it reduces opposition and existing barriers, since members may be more ready for and accepting of change. Therefore any model employed may be more effective if organisational culture change has been tried first and failed.

2.7.4 Organisational Culture Change for the Academy Context

In discussing the selection of a specific model type for the Academy context of this research, approaches have been identified as being divided between a typology based approach (which has its roots in objectivism) or a process-orientated approach (which has its roots in interpretivism). Yahyagil (2015) attests that typology based models can be beneficial for classifying the culture of a complex organisation into set criteria. However, since there are no preferred criteria or a type of desired culture for the Academy context, the process-orientated approach is selected for this research. Furthermore, since this review has previously selected a symbolic paradigm from an interpretivist epistemology (p.22), the interpretivist process-orientated approach is deemed more suitable for use within this research. The benefits of such an approach are agreed by Patel (2015) who argues that it seeks to understand culture through

the cyclical processes of interpretation, understanding and action. It is therefore more effective than an objectivist based approach, which advocates cultural stability, in understanding and explaining the fluidity of organisational culture change.

2.7.5 Towards Selecting the Cultural Web for the Academy

In discussing models based on this approach, the cultural web was identified as a key model and it could therefore be employed for the Academy context of this research. However, in selecting a model for one's research, Brown (1998) argues that there are a number of other issues which can affect their successful deployment. This is later agreed by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008), who identify that there are a number of key dimensions which can influence models of change. It is therefore necessary to discuss these factors and ensure issues in model implementation are understood, before selecting the cultural web model for this study and enabling research question one to be more fully addressed.

2.8 Selecting an Organisational Culture Change Model

There are a number of issues which arise when selecting a model to change the culture of an organisation (Brown, 1998). This is further explained by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) who reviewed organisational change literature and empirical research in the 1990s. They note that efforts to change organisations, using conceptual models, can prompt a series of questions and issues which need answering. Smith (2003) adds to this debate and stresses that understanding different issues with change is becoming increasingly important, particularly since it is so difficult to change an organisation's culture. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) agree and note that while there are more and more models being developed and employed in order to change an organisation, there are also high failure rates. For instance, Oxtoby *et al.* (2002) identified failure rates of up to 70 percent in organisational change initiatives,

however it is not clear whether these failure rates differed depending on the organisational type. In an effort to address these failure concerns, key issues in model deployment will be discussed below. These will then be compared against the cultural web and other models of culture in an effort to ensure the most appropriate model is utilised for this study.

2.8.1 Issues in Models Selection – scale of change

Brown (1998) contends that a key element when employing a model for one's research is the scale of change. This is where models differ in terms of the extent of the change, defined as either radical or incremental change. Alvesson and Sveningsson later (2008) support this view and describe radical change as large scale change that seeks to fundamentally alter the culture of the organisation. Incremental change on the other hand is understood to be the operational changes that affect parts of the organisation. For instance, Lundberg (1985 cited Brown, 1998) with regard to the organisational learning cycle of change, aims for more fundamental large-scale change in an organisation, while Gagliardi's (1986) model seeks to make incremental changes which ultimately lead to organisational change. Burke (2002) however contests the sole use of incremental and radical change and suggests there are a number of other types of change such as evolutionary versus revolutionary, transactional versus transformational, discontinuous versus continuous, episodic versus continuing flow, strategic versus operational and total system versus local option. This suggests that there are a great number of methods which can be used to initiate change in an organisation. However, in assessing these different types of change, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) conclude that they all have generally the same meaning, as they are merely different authors' attempts to describe the same two types of change. In summary, it is suggested that prior knowledge of the type of change is vital when comparing organisational culture models, as radical change

may be more difficult to achieve and therefore lead to the dismissal of such a model for the research.

2.8.2 Scale of Change for the Academy Context

In selecting a type of change for the Academy context of this research, Tushman and O'Reilly III (1996) contend that revolutionary change is encouraged as it is more likely to result in sustained success. Indeed Bailey and Johnson *et al.* (1997) also warn that incremental change may not easily remedy the strategic drift of an organisation. In summary Hopkins (2001) contends that a vision of reform that substantially affects the school life will have more effect than a cautious incremental change. Therefore for the purpose of this research, revolutionary change is selected for the model to be employed at the Academy.

2.8.3 Issues in Model Selection – locus of change

Another issue in the selection of an organisational culture model is the locus of change, which is the level or scope of change the model seeks to initiate. For instance, Brown (1998) contends that organisational culture could be specified at different levels, such as a single department, the whole organisation, a market segment, a whole profession or industry, or an entire nation. Whilst Hopkins (2001) notes that although the school could be argued to be at the centre of change, it is also embedded in an educational system which includes different levels of stakeholders such as a local authority, governors, Headteacher, teachers, support staff and parents. Senior (2002) adds to this discussion and suggests that it is necessary to be clear at which level of culture the model, and therefore the research, is focused on. However, it is perhaps not always possible to be conclusive in the analysis of levels of culture explored, as some models can be used for more than one locus or more implicitly explore different cultural levels in their construct.

2.8.4 Locus of Change for the Academy Context

For the purpose of this research, the subcultures selected are the teachers, Heads of Department, and senior leaders, as they are purposely split into clear hierarchical levels in the Academy. This also offers the breakdown of different subcultures to aid in the analysis of the overall culture for the Academy. This may make it easier to identify divisions and similarities between the different subcultures that exist. Support for this type of analysis is provided by Lancaster and Di Milia (2015) who consider the examination of subcultures as an important area of investigation, since a number of organisational studies assume the existence of a monoculture. This is agreed by van Marrewijk (2016) who contends that there have been few interpretive studies which explore the impact and integration of organisational culture with subcultures and therefore consider the impact this can have on organisational performance. In addressing the previous criticism, whilst the main locus of change is deemed to be at the organisational level, this study will consider the hierarchical subcultures that exist at the Academy. This also aids in the formation of research question two: do different stakeholders share the same perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy? In deciding upon the locus of change it is now necessary to discuss the timeframe of the model's deployment at the Academy.

2.8.5 Issues in Model Selection – timescale

Timescale is an issue in the selection of organisational culture models. This refers to the time it will take for the change to occur, for instance, weeks, months or years. Brown (1998) suggests that while timescale relates directly to the issue of feasibility, few pay attention to the time variable or life-cycle when exploring a model. This may therefore reduce the chance of successful model implementation and organisational change. This is affirmed by Zaheer *et*

al. (1999) who insist that timescale is a key element that is often more implicitly explored in organisational theory. It is therefore important to explore the timescale of a model's implementation in order to ensure it can be successfully employed on the designated organisation. For instance, Fullan (2003) contends that some education based institutional changes can take up to 10 years to implement. Consequently, timescale will need to be addressed to ensure it is appropriately selected and feasible for the Academy.

2.8.6 Timescale for the Academy Context

Gaertner and Pant (2011) contend that school inspections can be used for steering improvement, especially following a failed inspection. However in relation to the Academy context, since the last inspection was positive and there is no identified reform or governmental change that is driving any Academy transformation, there is no identified timescale for this research. Yet should a model take three years to embed in order to fundamentally change the culture, then this might be out of the scope of this research. In particular this doctoral researcher may not have time to complete such a time-dependent study. While this may appear like a weakness, Brown (1998) suggests this may only be partially true, as due to the complexity of organisations and the process of change, it may be practically impossible to outline a definite timescale as changing culture is not like changing a policy. Smith (2003) also adds to this debate and suggests that there are further issues if the change process goes on too long. This is because the longer the process the more opportunities there are for things to go wrong. In terms of identifying a timescale for this research, since this is a doctoral study it is perhaps unlikely to have years to implement a model. A timescale of months is therefore selected for the collection of the data and assessment of the Academy's culture. Thus ensuring the application of the model does not last years and is therefore within the scope of this research.

2.8.7 Issues in Models Selection – source of change

In addition to the outlined criteria, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) discuss the importance of the source of change. Here, a separation can be made between planned and emergent change. Planned change is usually central and strategic, driven by more senior management within the organisation or by external consultants. Bamford and Forrester (2003) offer more clarification and suggest that planned change is a process that moves from one 'fixed state' to another through a series of pre-planned steps. While emergent change acknowledges the importance of lower level managers and employees and it emphasises context and the more 'messy' nature of change. By (2005), who conducts a critical review of some of the main theories and approaches to organisational change, adds further to the discussion of emergent change. He notes that this source accepts the unpredictable nature of change, viewing it as a process that develops through a multitude of variables within an organisation. In summary, depending upon the model employed, a different source of change may be required, each needing a different method of implementation and a different level of access to the organisation.

2.8.8 Source of Change for the Academy Context

In assessing the merits of each source of change in relation to the Academy, Schein (1985) criticises planned change for its emphasis on isolated change and the fact it does not incorporate radical change. While Dawson (1994) contends that emergent change is less prescriptive and more analytical because it is less reliant on defined goals and actions. Burnes (2004) agrees and suggests emergent change is more effective at understanding the complexity of issues needed for sustained change because it achieves a broader understanding of the problems of managing change by engaging with more stakeholders. This is developed

by Fullan (2007) who posits that large-scale educational changes can only occur if people at all levels of the school are involved in the reform. In accepting this argument, emergent change is selected for the Academy context of this research.

2.8.9 Summary of Model Selection Criteria for the Academy

In summary, key points in the selection and deployment of an organisational culture model have been identified: scale of change, locus of change, timescale and source of change.

However it is recognised by a number of authors that researchers do not go into detail about their inclusion and exclusion criteria when selecting a model (Brown, 1998; Senior, 2002; Cameron and Quinn, 2011; Morris 2014). This chapter has addressed this criticism by presenting the following criteria as required for the model to be employed for this study:

- **Scale of change:** revolutionary
- **Locus of change:** organisational
- **Timescale:** months
- **Source of change:** emergent.

2.8.10 Selection of the Cultural Web for the Academy Context

In assessing these criteria against other organisational culture models, a process-orientated approach was selected. It is therefore the intention to compare Johnson and Scholes' (1993) cultural web with other process-orientated models, which focus on the organisational level as the locus of change. In completing this task, Brown (1998) identifies the following models as being a representative sample of process-orientated models:

- Lundberg's (1985) model based on the learning-cycle of organisational culture change.

- Dyer's (1985) cycle of cultural evolution, which contends that the perception of crisis with a leadership change are required for culture change.
- Schein's (1985) model based on a simple life-cycle framework.
- Gagliardi's (1986) framework based on incremental culture change.
- Robert and Brown's (1992) Compilation model (based on the ideas of Lewin, 1952 as modified by Schein 1964; Beyer and Trice 1988; Isabella, 1990) which provides insight into microprocesses of culture change.

The first model, Lundberg's Learning cycle (1985), is a model for understanding cultural change in an organisation. The fundamental concept of this model is that a culture experiences some form of organisational challenge or predicament which prompts the process of inquiry. This then leads to the uncovering of a new or unknown phenomena. However the source of change is managerial lead and the model also outlines that a stable leadership team is needed for change. Brown (1998) also concludes that in order for change to occur using this model, a change in leadership is needed. As such, it is unlikely that a new Principal would be appointed at the Academy under investigation for this research.

In exploring Dyer's (1985) model, this offers more radical change and its perception of culture is based on an understanding of artefacts, perspectives, values and assumptions. However it focuses on the source of change as being top down, which is further explained by Dyer (1985), who argues that the most "important decision in culture change concerns the selection of a new leader" (p.223). In contrast, Schein's (1985) life-cycle model is based on his model of culture and therefore has a clear framework to draw upon. It also discusses timescale, suggesting that phases of the life cycle can last a number of years. However this timescale may be too long a time period to implement for this research. Furthermore its

source of change is top down and so it does not meet the model selection criteria for this research.

In reviewing Gagliardi's (1986) framework, this is based on the importance of assumptions and values, with secondary importance to symbols, artefacts and technologies. Conversely this model explores culture change as an incremental process, which rather than resulting in a transformed culture, sees one developed. Similar to Lundberg's model, this model is not selected for this research since change is achieved by the leaders of the organisation. While Roberts and Brown (1992) Compilation model, is based on a number of previous authors (Lewin, 1952; as modified by Schein 1964, Beyer and Trice 1988; and Isabella, 1990), Brown (1998) notes that change is led by senior managers, who identify and feel the need for change and consequently this is not a factor required for this study. Finally in exploring Johnson and Scholes' (1993) cultural web, the authors argue that its source of change can either come from executives at the top or bottom up from employees. In matching other criteria required for the model selected for this research, Seel (2000) notes that the cultural web focuses on change that is more likely to result in lasting revolutionary change. Furthermore Johnson (1992) maintains that the model is beneficial due to its 'shorthand' nature at understanding complex organisational structure; its timescale for implementation is therefore deemed as months. In summary, the cultural web has been identified as meeting the desired criteria required for the model selected for this research.

2.9 Summary of Chapter

In conclusion, research question one has been considered and the cultural web model has been selected for this research. In offering further justification for choosing this model, Finnie *et al.* (1999) contend that it may be particularly useful for schools because its unique

design can offer key insights into the symbolic aspects of a school's culture. This is agreed by Sun (2008) who also contends that the cultural web model is useful for making links to the symbolic aspects of an organisation, which can then be used to guide the development of strategy. This model can therefore also be seen as fitting with the symbolic paradigm that has been chosen for this study (p.22). The next stage of this study will involve designing the research and then testing the cultural web, in an effort to see whether it can be successfully employed for the Academy. This is in an effort to finish answering research question one and ensuring the selected organisational culture change method is supported by research methods, which facilitate a successful investigation of the Academy's culture. Completing the next chapter will also help in planning a design for addressing research question two: do different stakeholders share the same perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy? Furthermore, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) contend that the cultural web model is particularly useful for offering a clear sequential process for initiating change. Thus it is also necessary to consider how useful the cultural web model is in providing targets for Academy improvement. Consequently, this has helped the formation of research question three: what are the Academy's organisational culture targets for whole school development to ensure long term sustainability? This approach is supported by Senior (2002) who insists that clear targets are of paramount importance if organisational improvement is to be effective.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Thomas (2009) contends that successful research depends upon having a clear research design and methodology. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to rationalise the design and methodology employed for this study. In beginning this process, Flick (2009) advocates that a key starting point is considering the context of the entity being explored. Consequently, this chapter begins with discussion of the Academy under investigation. This is followed by the location of the study within the wider field of educational research, including acknowledging any associated criticisms. The chapter then continues by clarifying the philosophical and research approach utilised with this study, followed by an examination of the research design and methods. It concludes with consideration of the ethical issues and possible limitations of the selected research design.

Completing the above process will also answer research question one and outline the methods for addressing research questions two and three. This is in an effort to meet the aim of this research which is to investigate the organisational culture of an Academy. In summary, the three research questions are outlined below:

- **Research question one:** what is the most appropriate method for exploring organisational culture change in the Academy?
- **Research question two:** do different stakeholders share the same perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy?
- **Research question three:** what are the Academy's organisational culture targets for whole school development to ensure long term sustainability?

3.2 The Academy Context

“The context is all important for understanding the phenomenon” (de Vaus, 2001, p.236).

In exploring the organisational context for this research, the Academy converted from a comprehensive school to an academy in 2010. It is located in the Midlands and has approximately 1200 pupils on roll who range from 11 to 18 years of age. The Academy’s Ofsted report (2012) reveals that about two fifths of students are eligible for pupil premium (additional government funds for pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years); a similar proportion of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds. It is non-selective and lists its specialism as Science. The Academy has three sponsors; two of which come from local businesses and one main sponsor which is a Midlands based education Foundation. This Foundation has a number of other schools in its network, which are made up of both independent (fee paying) and grammar schools (selective by means of an 11+ entrance exam).

3.3 The Researcher’s Relationship to the Academy

“Research is a disturbance, and it disrupts routines, with no perceptible immediate or long-term payoff for the institution and its members” (Flick, 2009, p.109).

The above quotation reflects the potential negative connotations which are associated with entering an institution as a field researcher. This was deemed especially important since I was researching the institution which I work. I was therefore keen to minimise any potential disturbance and disruption of routines for the Academy. Consequently, further considerations are also discussed in the ethics section of this chapter. In terms of my relationship to the Academy, I have been a member of the teaching staff since 2007 and they have funded six

years of my Education Doctorate. Since I am a member of the teaching staff at the Academy, it should be noted in addition to the internal funding source, other potential issues may arise. One such issue is that of internal validity (which is discussed later in this chapter) and the capacity of this research to accurately depict the Academy's organisational culture. For instance, my dual role as a member of the Senior Leadership Team and as an insider researcher may have influenced respondents, who may have had preconceived ideas about me or may have been less likely to divulge their 'honest' opinions for fear of repercussions. This may have altered their responses and consequently have had an impact on the internal validity of this study (Denscombe, 1998). Similarly, I may have preconceived ideas and perceptions of the organisation and its members. One possibility could have been to conduct the study in another academy, however Hellowell (2006) argues that again I could be considered an insider as I already possess knowledge of academies and the secondary education system. Yet, being a teacher-researcher does offer certain benefits, for instance Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) assert that teacher-researchers have fewer issues in terms of access and entry to organisations, since they often conduct research in environments they are employed in, or are familiar with. Denscombe (1998) also espouses access to participants and the costs of travel can be major barriers to completing research, both of which are resolved by my employment at the Academy. In summary of insider research, Hellowell (2006) concludes that it is no less valuable than other forms of research. Furthermore, when conducting such research, it is important to have a thorough understanding of reflexivity and reflect critically on one's own perceptions. It was therefore necessary to be as reflexive as possible and acknowledge any factors which may have influenced the research process and its conclusions.

3.4 Criticisms of Educational Research

“...many of the criticisms need to be taken seriously. They raise questions about the nature of educational research which are rarely reflected upon as systematically as they need to be”

(Pring, 2000, p.157).

A useful starting point in understanding the design for this study is to consider the wider field of educational research. Pring (2000) suggests before beginning this type of research it is necessary to explore the criticisms. For instance, The Hillage Report (1998) contends that educational research does not provide governments with the answer as to which alternate policy to select, nor does it help improve professional practice. Furthermore, the report also suggests that this type of research is often politically motivated and exclusive of those who do not share the same ideological underpinning. However Ribbins and Gunter (2002) question the conclusions of the Hillage Report (1998) and offer an alternative position. They posit that educational research may not be inferior and instead the particular methods employed in the report may have led to this result.

Another relevant issue with educational research is that of the political pressures. For instance Pring (2000) argues that due to the changing nature of educational research, such as the shifting positions, values, educational aims, policies, and so on, there will always be a need for scepticism when it comes to this kind of research. Yassi *et al.* (2010) concur and they identify funding as a key issue when it comes to educational research. Particularly since educational researchers are increasingly relying on funding from organisations, each with their own set of political and financial interests. In support, Pring (2000) notes that there will always be those who try to exercise their power or attempt to control criticism in order to promote certain opinions. In terms of this research, it is funded by the institution I work for

and their political aims and policies may have had a bearing upon this study. In an attempt to address this issue, Yassi *et al.* (2010) is kept in mind, as they note that researchers and universities should not be stopped from accepting funding from whomever they want. However it is important to acknowledge where or from whom the funding comes from and recognise their potential political power and influence on the research. Thus in this research, it is important to acknowledge that the funding has come from the Academy itself and recognise the potential bearing this may have had. For example, one issue could be the willingness of the Academy to accept any possible criticisms about its culture. In addressing further challenges of educational research, Pring (2000) argues that perhaps the fault may lie with the researcher's ability to develop an adequate theoretical framework. The next section will therefore discuss situating this study within the wider educational field.

3.5 Wider Framework

Bassey (1999) warns that there are various kinds of educational research, all of which engage in judgements and decisions. This is agreed by Pring (2000) who claims that many different sorts of studies come under the heading of educational research and it is therefore helpful to consider the broader picture and situate the study within its wider framework. One such attempt to map the field of education studies is presented by Ribbins and Gunter (2002). They discuss the importance of outlining the knowledge domain and thus enabling the research process to be more easily understood and charted. In completing the aforementioned, this research is orientated towards the evaluative knowledge domain. This category of research was previously discussed by Bassey (1999) as the attempt to understand what is happening by describing, interpreting or explaining. This ultimately leads one to make value judgements and the expected endpoint is that a researcher may use the findings to identify recommendations for change. This is more concisely summarised by Gunter and Ribbins

(2002), in their second article on mapping the field of education, as the “measuring effectiveness and conditions for improvement” (p.387). In identifying the educational framework for this study, Pring (2000) views that outlining ones philosophy increases the probability of quality research. This is earlier agreed by Harriss (1998) who posits that identifying ones philosophy can be a useful and helpful practice, allowing one to view an activity or conduct research from different perspectives. Although the author does warn that in reality this can be an extremely challenging task. In attempting to complete this task, the next section explores the philosophy of this research.

3.6 Philosophical Approach

In exploring the philosophical approach of this research it is useful to acknowledge Crotty (1998) who suggests that it is necessary to consider the notions of ontology and epistemology, since they are both utilised in order to inform the research approach. Starting with a definition of ontology, Hay (2002) argues it is the answer to the question: what is the nature of the social reality that is being explored? Thus ontology is concerned with being or the nature of existence; specifically in terms of how we view our reality. This discussion, which Pring (2000) argues has been the ongoing subject of educational research, has two polar traditions. At one end there is objectivism, this is the view that one reality exists. Grix (2002) postulates this position perceives the social phenomena and its meaning to exist outside of the social actor. From this position the culture of the Academy exists outside of its staff, in much the same way technology and other resources might. While at the other end there is subjectivism, this is the view that there are multiple realities that exist and reality is based upon people’s perceptions of it (Pring, 2000). Cohen and Manion (1994) counsel, in this case, the social phenomena are created through the perceptions and actions of social

actors. From this perspective, it is recognised that the staff create the culture of the Academy and each staff member may have a different perception of the Academy's culture.

Having explored the ontological perspective, Grix (2002) argues we are now able to answer the question of epistemology, which is what is it we want to know about this reality?

Epistemology is therefore concerned with knowledge, in terms of what kind of knowledge will it be possible to learn? At its simplest Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) espouse this is perceived by some academics as the division between those with an objectivist ontology – positivist researchers and those with a subjectivist ontology – anti-positivist (or interpretivist) researchers. Although Crotty (1998) warns that these terms are often employed interchangeably and it is therefore not uncommon to see objectivism employed for either a researcher's ontology and/or epistemology. Broadly speaking, Bryman (2008) asserts that the positivist position contends that any research conducted will be a matter of finding out about it and proving it true or false. Subsequently, this more scientific view would seek to establish the Academy's culture empirically and would hope to provide more easily measured outcomes or goals. While at the other end there is interpretivism, in this case any knowledge gained would be subjective meaning of social action. It therefore might seek to explore the Academy's culture by understanding the staffs' interpretations of it. In assessing both positions for this research, I find myself drawn to Pring (2000) who questions selecting a position at either end of the spectrum. Instead he argues there must be integration or overlapping of the two.

One such possible overlap of a philosophical approach may come from a constructivist ontology (often also referred to as constructionism), which Bryman (2008) attests orientates towards an interpretivist epistemology (and may therefore be considered different to critical

realism). This perceives meaning as not discovered but constructed, with actual meaning not emerging until consciousness engages with it (Crotty, 1998). From this perspective the culture of the Academy exists independent of the staff, but it takes the interaction of the staff group to decide and construct the Academy's culture. However constructivism also takes into account the role of the individual; while again it perceives meaning as constructed, it also acknowledges that there are as many constructions of meaning as there are individuals. In again relating this to the Academy, different groups of Academy staff may result in different variations of the Academy's culture. In further exploring the usefulness of constructivism, Bryman (2008) promotes its application for the understanding of culture and organisations, such as in the Academy context of this research. He postulates that culture has a reality that antedates the interaction of people, however it acts more as a point of reference that is always in the process of being shaped and formed. In agreement with the previous argument, I perceive constructivism to be applicable for this research since the staff at the Academy will be constructing their view of its culture based upon their experiences and interaction. Consequently, the assessment of the Academy's culture at one point in time may differ drastically to an assessment at another point, as it is continually being renegotiated. In summary, the constructivist ontology with an interpretivist epistemology was selected for this research.

3.7 Research Approach

Once the selection of the philosophical approach has taken place, Pring (2000) reasons researchers can now select their research approach. This is agreed by Flick (2009) who examines the dichotomy of a quantitative or qualitative approach. In providing an explanation of the two terms, Bryman (2008) postulates that quantitative research entails a more deductive mode, where the emphasis is on testing theory and employing more quantitative

methods in the data collection and analysis process; while qualitative research employs a more inductive mode, where the emphasis is on generating theory and employing more qualitative methods in the data collection and analysis. However Denscombe (1998) earlier warns these two approaches are often oversimplified and in fact the distinction between them can be far from clear. This is agreed by Flick (2009) who notes that both quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed for either approach or alternatively together in mixed methods research.

In assessing both approaches for this research, Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) contend that whilst quantitative researchers may criticise a qualitative approach and vice versa, the move towards the freedom to select qualitative school-based research has been a positive one; particularly since issues in education can be so multifaceted that focusing solely upon cause and effect, product, outcomes, or correlation, may be of limited value. This is advanced by Thomas (2009) who contends that educational research should not be restricted to one approach. In exploring which approach might be utilised for this research, Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) contend that because qualitative research places emphasis on individual actors it may be useful in focusing upon context and culture. This approach may therefore be considered useful for exploring the culture of the Academy. Bryman (2008) also suggests that a basic examination aligns the quantitative approach with a positivist epistemology and the qualitative approach with an interpretivist epistemology. The qualitative approach was therefore selected, as it aligns with the interpretivist epistemology which was previously identified as appropriate for this research.

3.8 Research Design

In progressing to the research design, which is considered pertinent for this type of research, Bassey (1999) suggests that the case study is a suitable qualitative approach for one or a small number of cases. This is supported by Flick (2009) who certifies that case studies are useful for offering rich description of real life contexts, such as organisations. Hence, this approach is deemed suitable for utilisation on the single case of an Academy. In considering which type of case study is the most appropriate for this research, it is recognised a number of authors have used a plethora of different terms to define and categorise different types of case studies. For instance, de Vaus (2001) discusses descriptive or explanatory case studies, while Levy (2008) discusses the benefits of idiographic case studies which aim to describe, explain or interpret a particular case. In offering some settlement, Thomas (2011) advocates that one must first select the approach to the case study, which can be divided between: testing a theory, building a theory, drawing a picture, descriptive or interpretative.

Since it was the intention to explore the organisational culture of the Academy by both describing and explaining it, the interpretative approach was utilised for this case study design. Furthermore, Johnson and Scholes's (1999) cultural web model, which was previously selected to be deployed for this research, may aid more interpretative case studies such as this one; since it is a tool that can be used as both "a descriptive and analytical device" (2001, p.300). This model can therefore be employed to interpret the data generated from the case study. This was deemed especially significant since the cultural web model was employed for utilisation in this research following an extensive literature review. It was therefore considered important that the chosen research design supported the employment of this model.

After selecting the case study approach, Thomas (2011) argues that the case study process can now be initiated. Whilst once again there are a number of different processes, the one selected for this research was the nested or embedded case study (Yin, 1994). Thomas (2011) explains that the nested case study focuses on comparing different examples found within a single case. Since it is the intention of this research to offer some comparison of different staff groups within the Academy (e.g. Senior Leaders with Heads of Department), and consider research question two, the nested process was deemed appropriate for this research. In summary the interpretative approach, with a nested process, was employed for this case study design.

3.9 Method Selection

Following the selection of the case study, the next step is to identify the data collection methods which could be utilised for this study. This is not necessarily a case of deciding which method goes with which design, nor is one design argued to be better than the other, but it is more about acknowledging the practical limitations and deciding what type of data the researcher wishes to obtain (Denscombe, 1998). Robson (2002) settles on five main research methods: questionnaires, interviews, observation, tests and documents.

In assessing the above methods for this research, it is helpful to consider Johnson and Scholes (2001) application of the cultural web, since this model has been selected for employment in this research. When deploying the model in their research they utilised focus groups which are a form of group interview (Bryman, 2008). Here managers work to produce their cultural web through discussion and social interaction (Johnson and Scholes 2001). This also fits with this researcher's ontological perspective of constructivism, where culture is something which is generated through interaction. However Seale (1999) notes a triangulation of different

methods should be used to improve the validity of the research. This is supported by Bowen (2005) who contends that triangulation can enhance the rigor of one's research. The focus groups were therefore supplemented with interviews and questionnaires. Following the selection of the research methods, the procedure for each will now be discussed. This will be furthered by an exploration of the sample size and sampling techniques for each method.

3.9.1 Research Method One – the focus group

A starting point in discussing focus groups is to note that they differ from group interviews. Whilst group interviews entail the researcher asking each participant to answer the question in turn, focus groups use group interaction as part of the method (Kitzinger, 1995). Here participants engage with each other and discuss and debate the topic. This open-ended discussion is guided by the researcher, who acts as more of a moderator/facilitator (Robson, 2002). The aim of this role is to ensure that group discussion addresses the topic while still having the freedom to explore points of interest that arise. There is therefore less emphasis on the need for the researcher to adopt a neutral role (Denscombe, 1998). The researcher can ask participants to elaborate on their responses or defend their position when challenged by another group member (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2007).

Another key element in considering focus groups for this research, is that the discussion usually revolves around a prompt or trigger in order to provide direction (Denscombe, 1998). The prompt in this case was the cultural web. Johnson and Scholes (2001) note that when using the cultural web it is necessary for the participants to understand its conceptual basis, as well as it also being beneficial to provide an example. However an issue with using an example is that participants may refer to it out of convenience, rather than providing their own responses (Johnson and Scholes, 2001). In an attempt to both explain the web and

remove the need for an example, the cultural web was modified (see appendix 2) to include question points (based on Johnson and Scholes, 2001, p.304) and academy specific terminology. This was in an effort to make it easier for members of the focus group to understand the component elements of the web, as unlike organisational managers, teachers may be less familiar with corporate terminology.

In terms of considering the size of the focus groups for this research, this is perhaps a matter of some debate. Some groups contain six to eight participants (Robinson, 1999; Moretti *et al.*, 2011), some suggest six to ten (Morgan and Krueger, 1998), some eight to twelve (Stewart and Shamdasni, 1990), and others have ten to fifteen (Sorbel *et al.*, 2011). In deciding whether larger or smaller focus groups would be appropriate, Bryman (2008) espouses that larger groups are not necessarily superior as some participants may have less involvement or feel less confident. In deciding upon the size, it is perhaps easier to begin by elaborating on the next steps in Johnson and Scholes's study. After twelve to fifteen managers have been selected, the moderator begins by explaining the seven conceptual element of the cultural web. Whilst this is being completed the managers individually note down examples for each element. The managers are then put into three focus groups, of between four-five, to compare their notes and produce their group cultural web. These groups then come back and present their cultural webs to each other and, at the end of which, one main cultural web is produced. For the purpose of this particular research, the focus groups were the same size (between four and five participants) as Johnson and Scholes's study, since they consider this to be the optimal size for utilising the cultural web model. The procedure was outlined as follows:

1. The cultural web was explained by the moderator. To help with conceptualisation members of the group could individually make notes on an A4 copy of the modified

cultural web (appendix 2).

2. Members then came together and as a group discussed the Academy's cultural web.

To help with conceptualisation members could also make notes on an A2 copy of the modified cultural web (appendix 2).

3.9.2 Research Method Two – the interview

After outlining the focus group procedure, the interview can now be discussed. There are perhaps three basic sub-types of interview to consider, all of which involve either being face to face or over a phone. These include the structured interview, the unstructured interview and the semi-structure interview (Thomas, 2009). The structured interview is perhaps similar to a questionnaire in that they are arranged around a series of questions which are usually short and seek direct responses (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). In these interviews the researcher has a high degree of control, as the structure of the answer is often predefined (Altrichter *et al.*, 2008). For instance there may be a high number of closed questions where respondents either provide a yes answer, no answer, or are given a selection of set responses or scales. In determining the advantages of structured interviews for this research, Thomas (2009) argues that although limited, the set responses can make the coding and analysis less problematic. Unstructured interviews on the other hand involve engaging the participant in conversation about the defined topic using open-ended questions (Streubert and Carpenter, 1999). However since this type of interview can provide a great quantity of in-depth information, its analysis can be very time consuming and this may cause issues if a large numbers of interviews were selected for this research. Lastly semi-structured interviews can be seen as offering a bridge between the structured and unstructured interview. Here, a list of issues is included but with the freedom to deviate and follow up points as necessary (Thomas, 2009). For the purpose of this research, the semi-structured interview was adopted. This

offers the structure of topics to be covered but also the flexibility of the interviewee elaborating on points of interest raised (Denscombe 1998). Similarly to the focus group, the procedure was as follows:

1. The cultural web was explained by the interviewer. To help with conceptualisation the interviewee was given an A4 copy of the modified cultural web (appendix 2).
2. The interviewer then raised the topics of the interview, which were taken directly from the modified cultural web (appendix 3). To help with conceptualisation the interviewee could refer to their A4 copy of the modified cultural web (appendix 2).

3.9.3 Research Method Three – the questionnaire

Another tool employed in this research was questionnaires and the questions employed were once again based on Johnson and Scholes (2001) study (see appendix 4). This method was also selected as it may have aided in encouraging more honest responses, since participants might have felt more comfortable divulging their ‘honest’ opinions on paper, rather than with me face to face. Particularly since, as previously noted, I am a member of the Senior Leadership Team and they may have less interaction with me than Heads of Department. In discussing the self completion questionnaire in more detail, paper copies were provided to respondents in staff pigeon holes and electronic versions sent out via email. Respondents then had the choice of either depositing a paper copy in a box in the staff room or returning an electronic copy via email. Due to the questionnaire being self completed, the questions had to be particularly easy to answer as the respondent could not ask for clarification, as they can during an interview (Bryman, 2008). The questions for the questionnaire were therefore adapted from the interview, by breaking them down into separate elements and simplifying the terminology.

Bryman (2002) suggests that few open questions should be used in questionnaires, as closed ones are easier to answer and therefore have higher response rates. However due to the open nature of the cultural web, in that there are a variety of responses to each element, this would be problematic. It was therefore decided that each question was open and would thus allow for the full richness and complexity of the respondents' answers (Denscombe, 1998). While this may make the analysis and coding of the answers more time consuming, reducing the possible answers to a set of closed options may diminish the responses; thus limiting this researches understanding of the staffs' perception of the culture of the Academy.

Furthermore, Denscombe (1998) contends that open questions provide greater opportunities for the respondent to express themselves, and their exact views, in their responses. Closed questions can also provide respondents with pre-coded data which may be biased. In the case of the Academy, I may be making both positive and negative assertions about its organisational culture. Negative pre-coding may also have an impact on the willingness of the Academy to permit the completion of this research. This is recognised by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) who attest that research can meet with problems when it contrasts with the views of a hierarchically structured school. For instance the Principal could hinder the research being completed if he or she were to disagree with the findings.

3.10 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In terms of the sample population for the three research methods, this involved all teaching and non-teaching staff employed directly by the Academy. The decision to include both staff groups was in order to gain a more complete view of the Academy's culture and represented a total population size of 118 staff. The decision to include non-teaching is examined by Gillespie *et al.* (2001) who attest that non-teaching staff fulfil an important role in

educational institutions and are therefore a key part of its development. This is further explored by Bush and Middlewood (2013), who conclude that the views and management of support staff can often be neglected in research and therefore require greater study. Additionally, Mortimore and MacBeath (2003) argue that students should be involved in school improvement and this stakeholder group is therefore considered to be a potentially important part of the Academy's culture. However since the Academy has over 1200 students, and it would be considerably more time consuming to gain all their views, this is considered to be outside the scope of this research. Whilst the governors might also form part of the sample, McMahon (2003) notes that governors can be in full time employment, consequently may spend less time at the Academy when compared to staff, and therefore have a reduced proportional role in creating its culture. It is therefore considered appropriate that the governors do not form part of this research sample.

In terms of sampling and answering research question two, Denscombe (1998) asserts that questionnaires are useful in gaining the opinions of larger samples and so this method was employed for the 73 staff with no responsibility. Flick (2009) asserts that focus groups may be appropriate for more moderate sample sizes, since they can gain detailed feedback relatively quickly, and so this was chosen for the 31 staff with management responsibility. While Robson (2002) identifies that interviews are used for smaller samples, due to their time consuming nature, and so this method was selected for the smaller sample of 14 members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). In summary, each sample size and method is depicted in table 1 below and this facilitates in answering research question two.

Table 1 – Possible respondents from each method		
QUESTIONNAIRES		
Staff with No Responsibility:		
Teaching Staff, Teaching Assistants, Cover Supervisors, Administrative Staff and ICT Staff.		
73 total	56 Teaching	17 Non-teaching
FOCUS GROUPS		
Staff with Management Responsibility:		
Heads of Department (HoD), Pastoral Managers, Exams Officer/ Data Manager, Reprographics Manager and Network Manager		
31 total	22 Teaching	9 Non-teaching
INTERVIEWS		
Senior Leadership Team:		
Teaching and Non-teaching Senior Leadership Team.		
14 total	13 Teaching	1 Non-teaching
TOTALS		
118 total	91 Teaching	27 Non-teaching

The sampling technique employed for the focus groups was to stratify participants between teaching and non-teaching staff, in order to make comparisons possible and to again aid in answering research question two. A purposeful sample was also used to form the focus groups, which involved selecting participants based on the researcher's knowledge of the participants and the situation (Marshall, 1996). This enabled participants to be selected based upon the stratification identified above, as well as the researcher's knowledge of different staff members' availability for the focus groups. This sampling method was also employed for selecting when and who to interview, since I had to work around my schedule as a senior leader as well as the schedule of the senior leader I wished to interview.

3.11 Increasing Response Rates

In attempting to do everything possible to increase response rates, a more visually attractive questionnaire was produced. This was achieved by using single-sided coloured paper and keeping the size of the questionnaire as short as possible (four pages) (Denscombe, 1998).

Another technique was to follow up the request for completion of the questionnaire twice, and all respondents were entered into a prize draw of a £25.00 voucher for the winner (Robson, 2002). In order to offer partial anonymity, participants were not asked to enter their names onto the questionnaire. Instead Denscombe (1998) discusses the use of unique serial numbers which can be used for identification. Serial numbers were therefore used and a tick box was included to indicate whether or not the participant wished to be entered into the prize draw. The members of the focus group and interview were also entered in a prize draw of a £50.00 voucher for the respective winners. This is supported by Priebe *et al.* (2010) who note that financial incentives can dramatically improve participation in research.

3.12 Reliability, Validity and Trustworthiness

After examining response rates, another consideration in the design of research is whether it is reliable and valid. In first examining reliability, Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) outline that this refers to the extent to which any particular method of data collection would provide the same readings when repeated on different occasions. Possible ways to improve reliability are discussed by Flick (2009), who contends that the more detailed and documented the research process is, the greater the reliability of the research; since the data and procedures can be checked. Thus, the detail of the research process offered in this chapter may help address this issue. However, Thomas (2011) rejects reliability as a measure of qualitative research, since there can be no assumption that if the research were to be repeated by different people and at different times, similar findings would be generated. Whilst in next exploring validity, de Vaus (2001) discusses internal and external validity which he considers fundamental to developing an effective research design. Internal validity reflects to what extent the information gained from the study is valid, by understanding causal relationships; whilst external validity (or generalisability) refers to the extent to which the findings can be

generalised beyond the study (Robson, 2002). In exploring these concepts, Bassey (1999) considers them problematic in relation to case studies, since it is a study of a singularity. It is therefore more difficult to establish cause and effect relationships or make assertions about 'generalisability'. However Bush (2007) suggests that triangulation can be utilised in order to improve validity by cross checking the data. In summary of reliability and validity, whilst it has been previously noted that triangulation has been included in this research design, the following quote is offered as a perspective I align with: "the concept of reliability and validity are vital concepts in surveys and experiments – but not in case study research" (Bassey, 1999, p.74).

One alternate concept to reliability and validity is presented by Flick (2009) who discusses 'trustworthiness'. The benefits of considering 'trustworthiness' is earlier supported by Bassey (1999) who suggests it 'successfully illuminates the ethic of respect for truth in case study research' (p.75). In relation to the collection of data and increasing the likelihood of credible results, this concept highlights the importance of 'prolonged engagement' with the data, 'persistent observation' in the field and a 'mixture of methods, researchers and data' (Flick, 2009). In considering these questions, data was collected through 'prolonged engagement' which included the utilisation of transcripts for the coding of both the focus groups/interviews (lasting at least 45mins) and open ended questionnaires (4 pages long). 'Persistent observation' also took place in the form of 11 interviews, 22 focus group participants and 44 questionnaire responses (response rates discussed on p.79). Finally, a 'mixture of methods, researchers and data' were employed, which included a triangulation of three methods, revealing three different datasets and responses were also discussed with my supervisors, who assisted this research.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

In considering the impact of reliability, validity and ‘trustworthiness’ on research, ethical procedures and considerations are an area that must be adhered to. For instance the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011) outlines the importance the British Educational Research Association (BERA) has upon research designs and methods, which should be transparent and fit for the purpose of research. Ethics approval was therefore submitted to the ethical committee of this researcher’s institution prior to conducting this research (Robson, 1999). Before the research took place, participants were given full details of the research and asked to provide agreement to take part, thus providing informed consent (Denscombe, 1998). While for the questionnaire, completing and returning it was taken as consent for their responses to be used in this research (see appendix 5). Informed consent is extremely important in ensuring participants are aware of what they are participating in, know the implications of their participation, and have the right to withdraw (Bryman, 2008). In light of this, participants for the focus group (see appendix 6) and interview (see appendix 7) were asked to sign an ethics form before the session and copies were kept by this researcher. Participants were also asked for permission to record the session with a voice recorder and the recording was later transcribed to aid analysis. The actual responses were anonymised and names (which may be used when transcribing the interviews and focus groups – see appendix 8 for an interview transcript example) altered to protect anonymity. Additionally, assurances were provided to participants, that following responses there should be no fear of negative consequences; since my role was as a researcher and not as a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Bryman’s (2008) warning, that focus group recordings are often more difficult and time consuming to transcribe, was also acknowledged; particularly when two or more participants speak at the same time. It was therefore the moderator’s role to ensure that overlapping conversation was kept to a minimum. Whilst, in compliance with the

Data Protection Act, 1998 (cited Pedley 2002), all data gathered was stored securely, off site and away from the Academy.

In formally registering permission for the research to be conducted at the Academy, the Principal (as the gatekeeper) was also asked to sign a negotiating access form. Robson (2002) argues that after establishing from whom it is necessary to seek permission, there is a checklist for negotiating access to the organisation. This should include an outline of the study, a formal request to carry out the study, discussion of the study outline with the gatekeeper, discussion of the study with participants and preparedness to modify the study. These criteria were therefore included in the negotiating access form which was signed by the Principal of the organisation under investigation (see appendix 9).

3.14 Data Analysis Method

Following the collection of data, the next step is the analysis. While there are a number of variations to consider, the method chosen was the constant comparative method. While this may be considered an aspect of grounded theory, Thomas (2009) contends that many researchers often confuse the two and in fact grounded theory is unnecessarily complex. Flick (2009) counsels that the constant comparative method involves reviewing one's data again and again, in an effort to produce themes which capture or summarise its contents. Furthermore it is also a suitable approach for more qualitative research and is therefore deemed suitable for this research. While there are many different methods for employing the constant comparative method, such as Miles and Huberman's (1994) data reduction, the process that was employed for this study can be viewed in appendix 10. The mapping of the themes, which were derived from the data, was based upon the conceptual model of Johnson and Scholes's cultural web. This involves reviewing the data one element at a time (e.g.

stories), rather than reviewing all seven elements together. Once each element of the cultural web was analysed, it was mapped onto the corresponding element of the model.

3.15 Limitations of the Research Design

“In practice the social researcher is faced with a variety of options and alternatives and has to make strategic decisions about which to choose. Each choice brings with it a set of assumptions about the social world it investigates. Each choice brings with it a set of advantages and disadvantages. Gains in one direction will bring with them losses in another, and the social researcher has to live with this” (Denscombe, 1998, p.3).

While it is hoped that this research will be of value to other organisations wishing to consider their organisational culture, it is acknowledged that it will have limitations in its application. Bryman (2008) suggests that a key criticism of research that employs a more interpretivist epistemology, such as in this research, is based upon the more general critique of qualitative research. In particular, this type of research is deemed too subjective as it is the researcher’s responsibility to identify what is and is not important. For instance during the data analysis/coding process, it was my responsibility to identify areas of significance and begin the classification of themes. Consequently, whilst a different researcher may implement the same coding process they may identify a different set of themes. This issue is furthered explained by Flick (2009) who considers selective plausibilisation, where the researcher will deliberately select quotes from interviews or observations which supports and illustrates the researcher’s findings. While the use of quotations may make the findings more comprehensible, they may have been selected solely on the basis that they illustrate the researcher’s subjective interpretation of the findings and theoretical framework. Furthermore Bryman (2008) suggests that this interpretivist based approach also leads to issues in terms of

true replication, since the researcher is the main instrument of data collection. For instance, what I heard or decided to concentrate upon in a focus group or interview may be very different from another researcher with a different conceptual framework.

In assessing the limitations of case study design, Denscombe (1998) focuses on five areas. Firstly, case studies are vulnerable to criticism in relation to the credibility of generalisations from its findings. Secondly, case studies can be perceived as producing ‘soft’ or descriptive data. Thirdly, the boundaries of a case can be difficult to define in a clear fashion. Fourthly, negotiating access to the case study setting can be difficult and demanding, since this type of research can require both sustained and high level access, which may require knowledge of sensitive and private information. Finally, it can be challenging to investigate naturally occurring situations without any effect arising from the researcher’s presence. Despite their difficulties, Noor (2008) maintains that case studies can have real benefits, such as the ability to gain a holistic view of a phenomenon, capturing the emergent properties of an organisation, as well as the results of findings from multiple cases leading to generalisation and some form of replication. In concluding the advantages and disadvantages of case study designs, Blaikie (2010) espouses that the criticism may just boil down to the prejudice that some quantitative researchers have against qualitative methods. While this may be an over simplification, it is important to acknowledge any potential weaknesses in one’s design and methodology before conducting the research and therefore help to ensure the appropriateness of the research instruments.

A final limitation of this design relates to the role of the researcher to the case study, which Flick (2009) deems the ‘professional stranger’ (p.110). This is concerned with the goal of orientating one’s self in the field, in order to view the routines which are taken for granted by

organisational members. However since I am a member of the organisation, it may be difficult to assume the role of a visitor. In addressing these potential negatives, Flick (2009) notes that researching as a stranger also means that certain activities, such as in the context of social groups, remain hidden and in order to access this richer data stream an insider's perspective is needed. Though, Baker (1999) earlier warns that while insider research may be valuable in gaining the 'insider scope' (p.81), there are issues of potential bias which may be built on the researcher's preconceived ideas. In offering some resolution, Thomas (2009) contends that whilst it is important to have a critical awareness of any potential bias and to scrutinise the data obtained and the conclusions drawn, interpretative research involves interpreting based on who you are. Thus, whilst it is important to identify your positionality (discussed on pp.6-7), it is ultimately irrelevant in interpretative research. In summary of these insider/outsider concerns, and as previously discussed, whilst I am an insider researcher and benefit from understanding internal practices; in order to adopt more of an outsider role, participants were told that my role was as a researcher and not as a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Consequently, assurances were also provided to participants, that following responses there should be no fear of negative consequences. Since it was not my purpose to report any of the information obtained back to the leadership of the organisation and all responses would be confidential and anonymous.

3.16 Summary of Chapter

In summary and completing research question one, whilst all the research decisions have been critically evaluated and reflected upon, the decision to investigate the Academy was directly influenced by my employment as a member of its staff. My philosophical approach which supports my preference for constructivism, with an orientation towards an interpretivist epistemology, has firmly guided my selection of a case study design. This has

also influenced my selection of focus groups, where knowledge will be constructed based upon social interaction. The focus groups on staff with management responsibility were also triangulated with interviews on the senior leadership team and questionnaires on staff with no management responsibility, in order to offer comparisons of different hierarchical levels and facilitate in a robust and successful data collection. In acknowledging the ethical issues and limitations of my research design and methodology, the next step is to progress onto the findings of my research and begin to answer research question two.

CHAPTER 4 – PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

“...an intellectual struggle with an enormous amount of raw data in order to produce a meaningful and trustworthy conclusion which is supported by a concise account of how it was reached” – Bassey (1999, p.84).

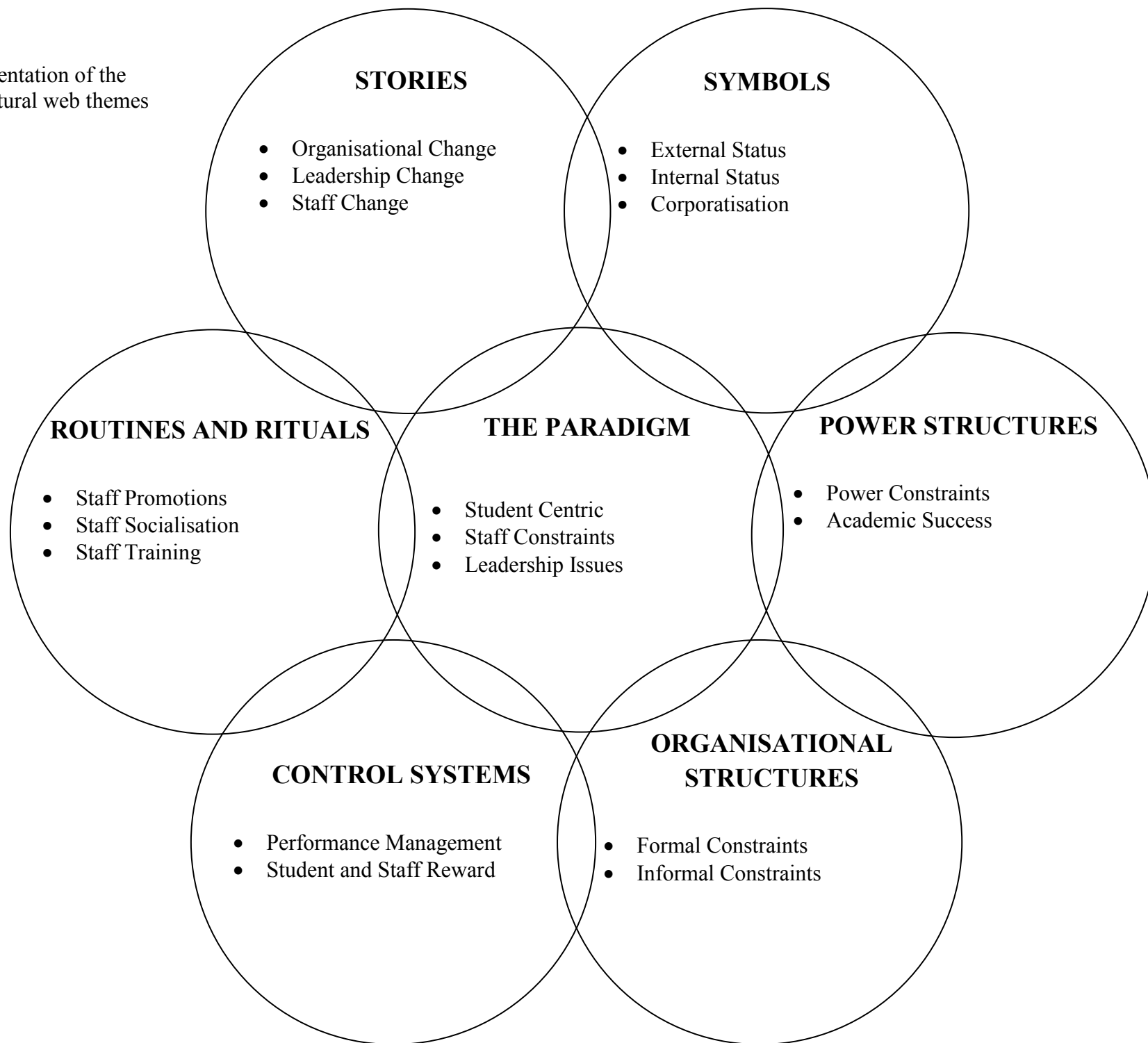
This chapter presents the findings from the three methods of data collection which were utilised in order to answer research question two: do different stakeholders share the same perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy? The first method employed was focus groups involving staff with management responsibility (SMR), the second was interviews with members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and the third was questionnaires administered to staff with no additional responsibility (SNR). This complementary mixed method approach was deemed beneficial as it enabled a comparison of different hierarchical levels and analysis of variations in sub-cultures (Hatch, 1997). The focus groups were also stratified between teaching and non-teaching staff, in order to facilitate comparisons between those two groups. Since the questionnaires and interviews could also be easily separated between teaching and non-teaching staff, comparisons could be made between these two distinct stakeholder groups, from all three methods. This assists in examining the variations in perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy for teaching and non-teaching staff. This was deemed particularly significant since Russell *et al.* (2005) advocate that it can be difficult to assess the boundaries between non-teaching and teaching staff. Therefore, this offered a clear method of comparison for those two sets of stakeholders at the Academy.

In outlining the comparison opportunities, the findings which have been generated by all stakeholders were used to establish a set of themes for the organisational culture of the Academy. This was achieved using the constant comparison method, which was applied to three different hierarchical cultural webs (SMR, SLT and SNR) for each of the three methods (focus group, interview and questionnaire). The constructs from all three hierarchical cultural webs were then composited and combined into one main cultural web. The main cultural web constructs were then reduced and themes were generated under each element of the cultural web. Consequently, themes in this chapter are not discussed one method at a time (e.g. focus group) but by one element of the cultural web at a time (e.g. stories). However where points of interest arise from each method, such as offering contrasting views of different hierarchical levels e.g. SMR compared to those on the SLT, or comparisons of differing views from teaching and non-teaching staff, these are selected and examined. This strategy is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994) who recognise that effective explanation often involves cycling back and forth between case dynamics and appreciating the impact of these different variables upon the main case. Therefore, examining the variations between various Academy stakeholder groups helps facilitate a more accurate understanding of its culture.

In discussing the data analysis format, findings are reported in a discursive style and quotations are selected by this researcher, in order to provide a deeper insight and to illustrate findings (Thomas, 2009). A key challenge of case study data analysis, which typically has large amounts of qualitative data, is to make the findings clear and coherent (Bassey, 1999). Consequently each element is clearly labelled at the beginning of each section and there are subheadings for each theme and sub-theme, for example element one: 'stories' has 'organisational change' as a theme and 'academisation and the environment', and 'Ofsted and school improvement' as theme subheadings. Finally, all the themes that have been generated

from this research, and are discussed in this chapter, are depicted in the cultural web visualisation below:

Figure 2 –
A visual representation of the
Academy's cultural web themes



4.2 Pilot Study

“...more resources may be devoted to this phase of the research than to the collection of data from any of the actual cases.” – Yin (1994, p.74).

In an effort to maximise the reliability, validity and overall robustness of this research, the three data collection methods were trialled in a pilot to establish whether any modifications were necessary (Yin, 1994). Although not a guarantee that the outcome of the research process would be a positive one, piloting has the advantage of testing the chosen design and increasing the probability that it could be successfully employed. This strategy also has the added benefit of increasing the researcher’s confidence in the design as they get to ‘learn on the job’ (Robson, 2002, p.185). Therefore, a pilot was conducted testing the interview with one member of the SLT, one focus group with five teachers who had management responsibility and a questionnaire was administered to six teachers without any management or senior leadership responsibility.

In reviewing the pilot, the returns and responses from each method demonstrated that participants could answer all questions and that data could be successfully collected. A key strategy, in the focus group and interview, was where I would verbally agree with both positive and negative participant comments. This offered validation to participants’ opinions and subsequently helped encourage more forthcoming responses; this strategy was therefore utilised for the main study. Finally, since the design appeared to be effective and it was not modified for the main study, the decision was made to incorporate the pilot responses in the main data set. This was also supported during the findings of the data analysis phase, as the constructs from the pilot study often matched those or had clear similarities to the main study.

4.3 Sample Returns and Characteristics

In examining the sample, there were a lower proportion of responses from non-teaching staff when compared to teaching staff. This is acknowledged and may therefore make inferences about non-teaching staffs' perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy less reliable, when compared to teaching staff. However, Denscombe (1998) posits that whilst extra attention needs to be paid to how representative a sample is and the extent to which the findings can be deemed 'generalisable', providing the limited sample size and bias is acknowledged, this need not necessarily invalidate the sample. In summary, the response rates, which are broken down between methods and teaching versus non-teaching staff, can be seen in table 2 below and this researcher acknowledges that the returned sample is weighted more heavily with teaching as opposed to non-teaching staff.

Table 2 – Actual response rates (N.B. – all responses are inclusive of pilot data)		
QUESTIONNAIRES		
Questionnaire– 60% response rate (63% Teaching & 53% Non-teaching)		
73 possible	44 Returns (35 Teaching & 9 Non-teaching)	29 Non-returns (21 Teaching & 8 Non-teaching)
FOCUS GROUPS		
Focus Groups– 71% response rate (82% Teaching and 44% Non-teaching)		
31 possible	5 Focus Groups – 22 Participants (18 Teaching & 4 Non-teaching)	9 Declined (4 Teaching & 5 Non-teaching)
INTERVIEWS		
Interviews– 79% response rate (77% Teaching and 100% Non-teaching)		
14 possible	11 Interviews (10 Teaching & 1 Non-teaching)	3 Declined (3 Teaching & 0 Non-teaching)
TOTALS		
Population sampled - 65% response rate (69% Teaching and 52% Non-teaching)		
118 possible	77 Participants (63 Teaching & 14 Non-teaching)	41 Declined (28 Teaching & 13 Non-teaching)

4.4 Presentation of the Findings

As discussed previously, this chapter is presented around the cultural web and themes are discussed in relation to each element of the web. However in order to make discussion clearer, findings from the focus groups, interview and questionnaires have also been grouped around the stakeholders involved in this study. This provides a ‘voice’ for each set of respondents from all three methods and helps in answering research question two. The first stakeholder group is *All Staff* from the study, the second is *Staff with Management Responsibility* from the focus group, the third is the *Senior Leadership Team* from the interview and the fourth consists of *Staff with No Responsibility* from the questionnaires. As previously discussed and to help in answering research question two, where points of interest arise from teaching or non-teaching staff, these will also be flagged and raised e.g. *Staff with No Responsibility – non-teaching* or *Staff with No Responsibility – teaching*. In summary, the possible stakeholder groups are listed below:

Table 3 - Stakeholder groups
<i>All Staff</i>
<i>All Staff – non-teaching</i>
<i>All Staff – teaching</i>
<i>Staff with Management Responsibility</i>
<i>Staff with Management Responsibility – non-teaching</i>
<i>Staff with Management Responsibility – teaching</i>
<i>Senior Leadership Team</i>
<i>Senior Leadership Team – non-teaching</i>
<i>Senior Leadership Team – teaching</i>
<i>Staff with No Responsibility</i>
<i>Staff with No Responsibility – non-teaching</i>
<i>Staff with No Responsibility – teaching</i>

As previously discussed, quotations have been utilised to illustrate findings. Where a stakeholder has referred to the name of staff member at the Academy, a pseudonym has been selected. For instance the Principal has been allocated the name Nigel, whilst the Vice Principal has been provided with the name of Margaret. Also, in order to make quotations clearer and to help distinguish between the various hierarchical levels and teaching versus non-teaching staff, in the text respondents are referred to by a three or four part alphanumeric code. The first part identifies the method, while the second part identifies whether they are a teaching or non-teaching member of staff and the third part outlines their organisational role. Since there are up to five members of the focus group, each participant has also been assigned a group identification number. In summary, an example of the alphanumeric system is shown below:

Code	Method Identification	Teaching or Non-teaching	Organisational Role	Group Identification
Q1, T, SNR	Questionnaire 1	Teaching	Staff with No Responsibility	N/A
Q2, NT, SNR	Questionnaire 2	Non-teaching	Staff with No Responsibility	N/A
F1, T, SMR, 1	Focus Group 1	Teaching	Staff with Management Responsibility	1
F2, NT, SMR, 1	Focus Group 2	Non-teaching	Staff with Management Responsibility	1
I1, T, SLT	Interview 1	Teaching	Senior Leadership Team	N/A
I2, NT, SLT	Interview 2	Non-teaching	Senior Leadership Team	N/A

Finally, the following terms have also been operationally defined and employed to describe the proportions of responses and to offer a clearer way of illustrating the findings:

- Overwhelming majority – approximately 85%
- Most – approximately 75%
- Many – approximately 50%

- Some – approximately 25%
- Few – approximately 15%

In offering clarification of how the findings will be presented in this chapter, discussion of the themes will now take place.

4.5 Cultural Web Element One - stories

The findings connected to this element were brief compared to other elements and explore the ‘stories’ which come to mind when thinking about the Academy’s history. Participants were asked to discuss the following ‘stories’: events, personalities and mavericks. From discussion of these areas the following themes emerged: ‘organisational change’, ‘leadership change’ and ‘staff change’.

4.5.1 Theme One - organisational change

The first theme of ‘organisational change’ was broken down into two sub-themes. The first part centred on the process of academisation for the school and the change in the environment. While the second sub-theme related to the impact Ofsted has had upon the Academy and the school improvement that has taken place. Both sub-themes will now be examined according to different stakeholders’ perceptions, which aids in addressing research question two.

4.5.1.1 Academisation and the Environment

All Staff

Most of the focus groups discussed the academisation process and the role this has had upon changing the organisation. This varied from the broad aspect of becoming an Academy to more specifics such as the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE)

across to Academy contracts and the worry of a new sponsor. Primarily this seemed to relate to the apprehension and uncertainty surrounding the change and what that meant for those working at the Academy. This is clearly illustrated by this response from one of the SMR:

“...I think the next thing after that was the whole us going into an academy, because again that was like a time when everyone was feeling a bit unstable, I think, and I’m just not sure what was going to happen” (F1, T, SMR, 3).

Another story explored was the change of environment which was typified by the transition to the new build. Some of the focus groups and many of the SLT discussed the academisation process in quite broad terms. However when specific reasons were discussed, they related primarily to the role of the main sponsor and this varied from the positive influence: “...it is this name of the main sponsor. It does bring a lot of energy to the staff, to the community and to the parents as well” (I11, T, SLT); to issues concerning why the main sponsor would be involved with the school: “...couldn't quite see what the benefits were for the main sponsor’s group” (I7, T, SLT). This may signify that at the SLT level there may have been mixed feelings over the rationale for the academy conversion and the main sponsor. This is illustrated in the quote below which highlights that other schools in the area were doing far worse.

“...we’re part of the main education sponsor. It’s not because the main sponsor has waved some magic wand and this is a school moving in the right direction. But the local education authority completely bottled and designated this school as an academy. Ignored the reality of what existed on the ground, i.e. the fact that other schools in the locality were doing far far worse, with far far worse resources as well. And just picked us at random and said that you’re going to be an academy and actually the myth about the fact that the main sponsor came and jumped into bed with us,

because they wanted to help move things forward. You know that all took ages to come through and they only got involved with us because they weren't getting something that wasn't broken" (I2, T, SLT).

4.5.1.2 Ofsted and School Improvement

Staff with Management Responsibility

Ofsted's impact was another key story in relation to organisational change and some of the focus groups discussed the impact Ofsted has had upon the school. This seemed to resonate particularly upon the 'Notice to Improve' (NTI) grading the school had received prior to becoming an academy. An explanation for this grading was provided by one focus group member:

"It was data and we were told that it was the core (English and Maths), weren't we? That was where the data had sort of let us down. But it still felt like we'd all been judged and we'd all been judged unfairly. It didn't seem fair, did it?" (F5, T, SMR, 4).

Whilst issues of school improvement were also discussed by the SMR, this was primarily focused upon an increase in the number of extracurricular events such as: awards ceremonies, carnivals, music trips, ski trips and sport trips.

Senior Leadership Team

More emphasis was put on Ofsted by the SLT, with some of them mentioning it during their interviews. The area discussed was the continuing impact Ofsted were having on Academy strategy:

"And as much as, you know, people sort of say we're not running the school for Ofsted, the fact of the matter is that, that they have the power to make or break us as

an institution, and so they're important. You have to kind of play the game a little bit" (I4, T, SLT).

However one perceived benefit of the NTI was noted by one member of the SLT. It led to a "...very much sort of in the trenches kind of atmosphere" (I4, T, SLT).

School improvement was also discussed by some of the SLT however this was not in relation to extracurricular events. Elements considered in relation to this area were the improvements in the school's reputation, especially when compared to other schools in the area.

Furthermore, it was suggested that this improvement may have coincided with becoming an academy:

"Well, for example school A and B. They have been struggling and historically they would have taken, for want of a better word, the better students. Particularly school B, but I think within [the] community now, that's not held with as high esteem as it used to be. So does that then coincide with the fact that we've then become an academy, with the sponsor that parents in the area would think stand for education?" (I3, T, SLT).

However another member of the SLT refutes this point and actually felt the school had begun improving before becoming an academy.

"In particular [the] local primary school Heads, were all fairly positive. Particularly about the atmosphere and the sense of order and that general atmosphere in and around the place that existed before academisation" (I2, T, SLT).

Staff with No Responsibility - teaching

Some of the teaching SNR also discussed other school improvements at the Academy. However, unlike the SLT, they were not concerned as much with reputation or when improvements had begun, but the types of improvements they had witnessed. For instance a number discussed “progress and improvements in exam results” (Q4, T, SNR), while others noted “behaviour improving from where it was” (Q5, T, SNR). A selection observed improvements in the Academy’s Ofsted rating, which is reflected in “the school rated as 'Good' by Ofsted” (Q14, T, SNR). Other elements mentioned were improvements in teaching and learning, investment in resources and other facilities at the Academy.

4.5.2 Theme Two - leadership change

The next theme in relation to ‘stories’ is that of ‘leadership change’. This is broken down into the following sub-themes which will now be explored: ‘change in Headteacher and Deputies’ and ‘SLT leadership issues’.

4.5.2.1 Change in Headteacher and Deputies

Staff with Management Responsibility

The previous Headteacher or Deputies were identified by an overwhelming majority of the focus groups. The previous Headteacher was considered by many to be supportive and a people person. This is illustrated by this quote:

“I think when the previous Head was here. He looked after the staff, that was his thing, wasn’t it? At Christmas time, the students weren’t in, the Head paid for a meal for everybody and the senior staff waited on the tables, and they dressed up in bib and tucker. They didn’t eat their meal until every member of staff had. He bought wine and soft drinks, maybe champagne I think” (F1, NT, SMR, 2).

Further support for the previous Headteacher as a people person is provided by the quote below, however it also suggests that there were issues in terms of the school's behaviour and achievement:

“...the previous Head, because I think he's very different to the current Head in terms of he is very people orientated and quite gushing with the kids. He used to buy Creme Eggs for the staff and do things like that, and so people have that, kind of, image of him. They don't necessarily talk about him as being a great Head in terms of behaviour and academic achievement, but they talk about him being a people person” (F3, T, SMR, 3).

Senior Leadership Team

Further insight is provided by some of the SLT, as they suggest that following the exits of the former Headteacher and Deputies, the current Principal (who was Head before academisation) and Vice Principal are key personalities. This first stems from the Principal being associated with a number of pre-academisation behaviour and achievement improvements:

“The new Head had come in and I say that because I came in at the same time. I imagine a lot of staff that were here were probably a little threatened by the change of regime. But the reality was after a year in or whatever, I think lots of fundamental changes had happened and there were significant improvements” (I2, T, SLT).

Whereas the Vice Principal was noted as addressing staff who might have been perceived as underperforming:

“...you had certain staff that were just doing the day-to-day. But they were dealt with; the Vice Principal dealt with them. Now the monitoring system that we have in place, where every member of staff is accountable now” (I11, T, SLT).

4.5.2.2 SLT Leadership Issues

Staff with Management Responsibility

With the change in the SLT leadership and their job roles, following the academy conversion, issues were identified with their leadership by most of the SMR. This is shown by the following quotation:

“I think there’s inconsistencies in how staff are dealt with, which then means that people have different stories... I don’t think there’s necessarily the united front that there should be, to allow it to be, the senior management [don’t] have one personality if you like. It comes down to very different relationships with different people. And that will affect, if you like the stories which are portrayed” (F2, T, SMR, 2).

Further issues were also highlighted with the support that the SLT offer the SMR they supervise:

“Sometimes you get the feeling that if you want to, if you do have a problem with something anyway, if you ask a question [to SLT] about it, nothing is going to change, so you might as well put your head down, just get on with it and deal with it” (F3, T, SMR, 1).

Finally, one SMR concluded that some of these issues may be traced back to “personality clashes” (F2, T, SMR, 2).

4.5.3 Theme Three - staff change

The next theme is that of 'staff change'. This is separated into the following sub-themes which will now be discussed: 'change in staff type' and 'staff morale and socialisation'.

4.5.3.1 Change in Staff Type

Staff with Management Responsibility

Most of the SMR noted that the staff at the Academy now are very conformist when compared to staff that previously worked at the old school. "I think that the legends have gone. I think they have gone because they have had to go, because of the way the Academy is going" (F4, T, SMR, 3). This quotation illustrates that changes at the Academy have caused some staff to leave. A possible explanation for this change is offered by focus group 1:

"The whole teaching culture is changing, isn't it? It's much more accountable now. Old school teachers who were just given the free rein to teach, they did and their characters came out. Nowadays you've got so many hoops to jump through, you can't really do it" (F1, NT, SMR, 1).

Senior Leadership Team

Many of the SLT also agreed there were no mavericks at the Academy and the culture is much more conformist. However one member attributed this change as not just Academy specific but also due to changes in the teaching profession as a whole:

"It's probably a combination of the Academy, and I think we've raised our standards, but I think it's also down to the type of, perhaps, culture that education is now, as a whole. So not just our school, but when I speak to colleagues at other schools, times have changed in terms of teaching" (S9, T, SLT).

Staff with No Responsibility

Some of the SNR also identified changes in the staff cohort. They identified a plethora of retired staff, or staff who left to pursue posts at other schools, as those with interesting personalities. Subsequently, these types of personalities no longer exist to the same degree at the Academy. An example of a key personality who has left the Academy is provided by this SNR member: “Fred Newman - his knowledge of music is amazing. His wit and humour is legendary” (Q41, NT, SNR).

Staff with Management Responsibility – non-teaching

Further changes in staffing were also discussed in the non-teaching SMR focus group. They observed that when non-teaching jobs were filled this was now by graduates and this had not previously been a trend: “...all the non-teaching posts, they're looking for graduates. I don't think any of us would get our posts now if we reapplied” (F1, NT, SMR, 2). This indicates that changes in recruitment are impacting non-teaching staff more significantly than teaching staff. In particular, this seems to be due to the raised qualification standards which had not previously existed.

4.5.3.2 Staff Morale and Socialisation

Staff with Management Responsibility

An overwhelming majority of the SMR concluded that staff morale is low at the Academy. This ranged from not feeling valued to more specific qualities such as having more freedom pre-academisation:

“ ... I think the ethos of the school was slightly freer and I think people, kind of see, that as being a nicer time, things were a little bit more relaxed maybe...in the sense that there was more freedom to do more kinds of things, maybe, you know, you could

take kids out of the school and do trips and things and I think people perceive that as a golden time” (F3, T, SMR, 2).

However there were also other reasons highlighted for low staff morale and these related to the lack of freedom of speech or, even more severe, the fear of being sacked or punished with a poor timetable:

“**SMR 3:** I’ve heard, I know of people who have said things in meetings and the next day they’ve been taken into someone’s office and been given a b*ll*cking about it...

SMR 2: So there is a fear.

SMR 3: There is a fear.

SMR 2: You might want to be a maverick, but there is a fear. Not necessarily, SMR 3 is right in that eventually [the fear] to be sacked. The ultimate thing might be. But there is a fear of being punished in some way. Whether it be a rubbish timetable, or more duties, or more cover” (F2, T, SMR, 2&3).

Senior Leadership Team

Some of the SLT did however report reduced socialisation in the staff. This is summarised by this quotation:

“In the predecessor school it was all about the community and the community coming in to do Summer Solstice and Summer Fairs and everybody was involved. Whereas now it’s a little bit more insular. It’s all about the immediate students” (I10, T, SLT).

This again reflects how the Academy has moved from being less staff orientated to more student orientated and this appears to have lowered morale. This may also relate to the more

corporate and ‘businesslike’ environment that now exists at the Academy, which is reflected in this response by one member of the SLT: “we went from maybe a very human orientated, humanistic mentality to a very bureaucratised one and we’ve not really found the balance in either way” (I2, T, SLT). This quotation summarises how the management style of the Academy has changed from one that is perceived as being orientated towards the well-being of staff, to one that includes increased bureaucracy and corporatisation of the Academy.

4.6 Cultural Web Element Two - symbols

This element of the cultural web explores the key symbolic aspects which represent the nature of the Academy. Participants were asked to discuss the following ‘symbols’: logos, offices, cars, titles, language and terminology. After discussion, the following themes were generated: ‘external status’, ‘internal status’ and ‘corporatisation’.

4.6.1 Theme Four: external status

Theme four was divided into the following sub-themes: ‘car cost’ and ‘parking position and duration’. Car cost explores the variation in the type and make of car which are owned by different stakeholders at the Academy. Parking position and duration examines the position that staff park their cars and the time in which they arrive and depart the Academy. Once again, in answering research question two, these sub-themes will now be scrutinised.

4.6.1.1 Car Cost

Staff with Management Responsibility

Most of the SMR considered car cost to be a key symbolic aspect of the Academy.

Discussion centred on the variation in car cost and the fact that some members of staff owned certain makes of cars that the SMR did not expect. Further insight into this was offered by

one SMR who identified a particular member of the SLT with an inexpensive car which they found surprising given “the amount of money he earns” (F4, T, SMR, 4). This was supported in another focus group that identified the Principal as another member of staff with a modest car: “I don’t know what he spends his money on, but I know it’s not his car” (F1, NT, SMR, 2). However it was also noted that members of the SLT with inexpensive cars were also juxtaposed by others who drove more luxurious cars and this is evidenced by the following quote: “Christopher always has a BMW; he updates his BMW every year” (F1, NT, SMR, 2).

Staff with No Responsibility – non-teaching

While some of the SNR noticed variations in car cost, there was also a trend with the non-teaching staff. Non-teaching SNR identified the more expensive cars: “BMW” (Q36, NT, SNR), “Audi” (Q42, NT, SNR), “Evoke” (Q43, NT, SNR) and “Mercedes” (Q44, NT, SNR).

4.6.1.2 Parking Position and Duration

Staff with Management Responsibility - teaching

Some of the SMR recorded that “who’s first on the car park” (F2, T, SMR, 4) causes “...conversations as to who comes in at what time amongst staff” (F3, T, SMR, 3). Further insight was offered by one SMR who noted that “the closer you get to basically to the front, the earlier you’ve got in, the closer you get to the school” (F3, T, SMR, 1).

4.6.2 Theme Five - internal status

This theme is divided into ‘front offices’ and ‘staff titles and promotions’. Front offices relates to those stakeholders that have offices near the front of the Academy building and the prestige and importance that is associated with it. While the staff titles and promotions refer

to the titles that staff have and their transparency, as well as the promotions that are awarded at the Academy and the celebration of successful candidates.

4.6.2.1 Front Offices

Staff with Management Responsibility - teaching

Many of the teaching SMR discussed the importance and prominence of the offices at the front of the Academy. This was described by one SMR as “...you've got Nigel as the Head of the organisation and you've got the finance office, you've got reception and the admin team. Like you say it's ‘this is our best china’” (F3, T, SMR, 2). This was further explored in another focus group, with one SMR feeling as though the front offices were a focal point for contact by one of the four most senior members of the SLT, who have offices in this location.

“**SMR 3:** I don’t like coming to work in the morning, because I walk through reception and invariably will end up being collared by one of four people [from the SLT] who need to talk to me about something or other. So I do try to come in through the student entrance, just because it gives me a little break” (F4, T, SMR, 1).

Senior Leadership Team - teaching

Many of the teaching members of the SLT also agreed that the front offices were the most prominent and important. This was continued by one member of the SLT who remarked that the closer you were, to those offices at the front, the more power you had in the organisation. “If you’ve got an office near the Principal, near to the ground floor, then you’re close to the seat of power. If you’re at the top of the building then you’re nobody” (I2, T, SLT). However one member of the SLT noted certain staff have negative perceptions of those in the front offices, such as those staff being quite separate from what happens on a day to day basis at the Academy.

“I think create issues with the wider staff and their sort of view of things is that they (those in the front offices) are very separate from the rest, from what actually happens in the school. And that’s perhaps the negative side of it” (I4, T, SLT).

Staff with No Responsibility

Many of the SNR, both teaching and non-teaching, also discussed the importance of the offices at the front of the Academy. Although for these staff, student services was singled out as the most important office. Elaboration for this may be provided by one SNR who shared: “student services because they tend to be the first point of contact for the students” (Q25, T, SNR).

4.6.2.2 Staff Titles and Promotions

Staff with Management Responsibility

Most of the SMR discussed titles and promotions at the Academy, which they considered to be secretive and lacking in transparency. One illustration is provided by this SMR:

“**SMR 2:** No one knew that I was Head of Department until - I think a lot of people only worked it out well over a year after I'd been doing the job. I don't think we know people’s job titles... it's very hush, hush, it's like all done behind closed doors isn't it?” (F3, T, SMR, 2).

This was also to the point where some SMR were unfamiliar with who is and is not staff:

“**SMR 2:** ... there are people walking around this building that we have no idea whether they're students, whether they're student teachers, whether they're NQTs,

because they don't ever get introduced to us. Whether they're sixth formers (F1, NT, SMR, 2).

This was perceived as also creating issues because, as one SMR states, "I wouldn't know who to talk to about something in particular really" (F4, T, SMR, 1). One possible reason for the lack of familiarity with titles was provided by another SMR in a different focus group: "there has been quite a high turnover of staff recently, the last few years. It's just a conveyor belt of people coming in and out" (F1, NT, SMR, 1). Whilst another focus group felt the Academy does not have an ethos of celebrating promotions and staff success and therefore signalling new appointments of staff:

"And yet people have achieved certain roles or status within the Academy, and sometimes it's not even been mentioned. Some of the ASTs went through that whole process for a year, and rigorous scrutiny at the end. And it wasn't even announced... I do think there's a lot of secrets in the Academy. Everything's very much like, you never know if someone tells you something whether you're allowed to say that or if you're going to get into loads of trouble because you've now passed that information on. And I just think that's a bit weird" (F5, T, SMR, 4).

The above quotation also reflects that this SMR perceives there to be a culture of secrets at the Academy.

Senior Leadership Team

Many of the SLT also agreed titles and promotions are not transparent at the Academy. However one member of the SLT perceived this as being due to continual changes in job roles and responsibilities.

“... people seem to sort of drift into roles, and drift out of roles, and no real explanation is given. Obviously the explanation is probably between the top sort of three or four members of leadership within the school, but there is no- the rest of the leadership team are not aware of what those transitions are. You know, somebody might appear on leadership one day, and you weren't necessarily privy to the fact that that was going to happen” (I7, T, SLT).

However what is also clear is that the changes in people's job responsibilities are also kept from most of the SLT, with the exception of the most senior three or four (Principal, Vice Principal and Senior Assistant Vice Principals). This was perceived to be to the extent where some of the SLT were not informed when a new member of the team had been appointed. However ironically, given the clandestine nature of titles and positions, many of the SLT also reported that titles are important at the Academy. Indeed one member of the SLT states:

“I think because a lot of people don't perhaps necessarily feel very valued because of the sort of culture. We're not very good at praising people here, in terms of staff ...So I think a lot of people associate their worth to the Academy by their money, by how much they're paid and therefore by association with their title” (I4, T, SLT).

This shows how this member of the SLT believes the status of titles is directly proportional to the value staff feel at the Academy.

4.6.3 Theme Six - corporatisation

This theme explores the 'corporatisation' of the Academy which is divided into three areas: 'Academy branding and link with sponsor', 'corporate environment' and 'corporation communication'.

4.6.3.1 Branding and Link with Sponsor

All staff

All staff discussed the branding of the Academy and the link with the main sponsor. This included an overwhelming majority of the SMR and the SLT, as well as some of the SNR. Whilst the logo was praised as being “quite a trendy” (F1, NT, SMR, 2), “modern” (I4, T, SLT) and “current” (F4, T, SMR, 3) it was also criticised for “throwing, however many decades of identity, away” (F2, T, SMR, 4) and it “doesn’t really mean anything to us” (I1, T, SLT). A possible explanation for the complete rebranding following academisation is offered by one focus group who perceived it as the Academy trying to “empathise the affiliation” (F3, T, SMR, 1) with the main sponsor. Indeed one SMR felt this attracted a feeling of prestige: “If you say the main sponsor’s name people go, ‘mm’, you know, and you don’t say the location bit; ‘I’m actually a teacher at this sponsor’ and they go ‘mm’” (F3, T, SMR, 2). One member of the SLT also noted that the branding had confused parents who assumed the Academy was a grammar school like some of the other schools of the main sponsor.

“...to the wider community and the outside world, that logo often conveys something else and it’s almost a misinformation or mismarketing. Because a lot of people buy into the fact that this school is a grammar school and part of the main sponsor’s brand” (I6, T, SLT).

However again some criticism was expressed at the Academy for trying to reinforce the link with the main sponsor when in fact the school and context appears very different to them:

“**SMR 3:** Because we are desperately, desperately trying to be like them and we are so far removed from them that it is quite hilarious... we are trying to follow everything that they do, so we are trying to follow high aspirations, which is great...Their

families [at the main sponsors other schools] are very supportive because they have had to put them through tuition ...Whereas our families sometimes aren't, sometimes are. I don't think it represents our thing" (F4, T, SMR, 3).

However an explanation for the reinforcement of the link with the main sponsor was perceived by one member of the SLT as a means of changing "the demographic and the cohorts we get through" (I1, T, SLT), both in terms of students and teachers.

4.6.3.2 Corporate Environment

Staff with Management Responsibility

Many of the SMR discussed the corporate environment of the Academy building and particular dissatisfaction was expressed with the design of the build:

"SMR 3: No windows, that stands out initially.

Moderator: What does that represent, if we don't have windows?

SMR 4: We're caged.

SMR 1: I don't think they've taken into consideration of what it's actually like to work at these offices with no fresh air, no open windows, no actual windows, it's like you're in a cage and this is your area" (F1, NT, SMR, 1&3-4).

Senior Leadership Team

This was also agreed by many of the SLT who felt the building did not have the character of the old one and felt much more sterile. This is shown in the following quote:

“I know in the previous building, even though I only went there a couple of times, there were in various places which I thought was really, really nice. There was that stained glass window, that somebody had worked on. There was just a couple of areas that you thought, that felt like part of the school. I think that the students that leave here as it stands won't- they don't have anything specific to remember about the building, about the fabric of the building. There is nothing that is sensational. It is very nice, it is very new, it is very modern, but it doesn't feel homely, it doesn't feel warm. It feels sterile. It feels like an office environment, or, you know, a hospital environment” (I7, T, SLT).

Issues with the build were also expressed by another member of the SLT who elaborated on the potential health issues associated with the building design. “...I think we haven't got enough windows in there, that sort of encourages a bit of health problems. That is an issue. That is an issue for me to be honest with the circulation of air” (I11, T, SLT). Another member of the SLT believed the aim of the office design was to make the building more corporate and productive:

“I think the ethos of the building does represent you know the ethos of what we're trying achieve from the above. Which is quite business like and an office environment and everyone getting down to their work and doing what they have to do to succeed” (I3, T, SLT).

The more corporate environment was also concurred by the one non-teaching member of the SLT who concluded that she was less fazed by the build changes due to her previous business background.

4.6.3.3 Corporate Communication

Senior Leadership Team

Many of the SLT perceived communication at the Academy to be more corporate. This included more guarded language which was much more formal and ‘businesslike’.

“It’s a lot less kind of chatty and because people seem, maybe again it’s just my perception, that they’ve got a lot to do and they have to get on with doing, so there is less scope for having a lot of jolliness and chatting” (I5, NT, SLT).

Further pressures on communication were also felt by one member of the SLT who noted the Assistant Vice Principal position created even greater emphasis on corporate language:

“The higher you are in the leadership, it is really important that you choose the language that you use because you could offend someone and that can have an effect on them. Language for me as an Assistant Vice Principal, I have to be really careful what I say to my colleagues” (I11, T, SLT).

Additional issues were also noted in the utilisation of emails which were deemed to be excessive:

“**SLT 1:** ...that’s just a killer and the emails can become attritional. The amount of cc’s that you’re in or out of is representative of your relative position to an argument.

Interviewer: So as a staff body we use email too much, we send too many emails?

SLT 1: Far too much, far, far, far too much. It creates more issues than it solves. I think that we should say that any issue that can be solved face to face shouldn’t be done through email. That’s what we should say as some kind of policy. You need to seek out that person. Also emails relating to staff issues, personal issues, anything, cannot be sent after Friday at three o’clock until Monday morning at eight o’clock. We should have an embargo and we should also have an embargo of emails sent out after six on an evening and before seven in the morning” (I1, T, SLT).

Staff with No Responsibility

Issues in the use of emails were also reported by a few of the SNR who observed that it is used too frequently “to communicate messages to all staff” (Q2, T, SNR). While a few of the staff discussed the use of corporate language, some also deemed the language to be negative. For instance it was suggested to be “confrontational” (Q27, T, SNR) and “rudeness, arrogance, downright bad manners of certain senior members of staff” (Q44, NT, SNR). Whilst a few also reported the use of informal language which could be “in the staff room” (Q1, T, SNR) as well as used by “teachers to students” (Q18, T, SNR).

4.7 Cultural Web Element Three - power structures

This element explores the ‘power structures’ of the Academy. Participants were questioned as to the core assumptions and beliefs, about what is important at the Academy, which are held

by the Senior Leadership Team. From discussion, the following themes were revealed: ‘power constraints’ and ‘academic success’.

4.7.1 Theme Seven - power constraints

This theme is divided into two sub-themes: ‘large and heterogeneous SLT’ and ‘autocratic leadership’. The first sub-theme refers to the organisation and the structure of the leadership team and the second sub-theme refers to the leadership strategy.

4.7.1.1 Large and Heterogeneous SLT

Staff with Management Responsibility - teaching

Findings for this element were again similar to the SLT leadership issues which were identified in stories. However, unlike the findings from the earlier theme, a possible reason for these issues was identified by one SMR who commented: “I don’t think they’ve (SLT) got a shared vision. I think there’s one or two people driving it and people; if you believe it or not, you’ve got to get on with it” (F2, T, SMR, 2). The lack of agreement in the shared vision was therefore suggested to cause power constraints, since only one or two people are responsible for the Academy’s strategic direction and core belief.

Senior Leadership Team – teaching

The above view was also replicated by many of the teaching members of the SLT. For instance one leader commented that the SLT are:

“a dis-homogenous group where ultimately if you’re looking at it from the outside in, only about two or three people would be perceived by staff as having a genuine influence as part of a leadership team” (I2, T, SLT).

Consequently, another argued the SLT is, "...not always aware of what each other is doing, and so sometimes we miss opportunities for working coherently and having it all a bit more joined up" (I8, T, SLT). One suggestion was that the SLT would benefit if it were smaller and this would help form a core belief:

"... it's easier to forge a corporate belief if the team is smaller. The team hasn't always been this big. The bigger the team, the more diverse it becomes, the more disparate it becomes" (I10, T, SLT).

However another senior member concluded that since the decisions are made by three or four people on the SLT, unless you are part of that group the divisions would still remain. This is reflected in the following quotation:

"There isn't the forum for discussion...because so much of what goes on in the school is done behind closed doors, in terms of [the] leadership team. So if you're within that group of three or four that might be meeting to discuss this strategy or that strategy, once that [decision] comes out from that room it's fait accompli" (I2, T, SLT).

4.7.1.2 Autocratic Leadership

Senior Leadership Team - teaching

Many of the SLT also identified the leadership style as being autocratic and further elaborated on the issues identified in the previous sub-theme. This led one senior leader to conclude the SLT meetings are "more information giving sessions than a strategy meeting" (I3, T, SLT). As a result, power and decision making was argued to rest with the Vice Principal:

“I think disseminating responsibility and power thing is massive. You know it’s just, you know the number of times I’ve heard people say ‘well the problem is it will go to so and so, but they’ll have to pass it on to Margaret (Vice Principal) anyway. So I might as well go and talk to her’ ... And I know people [on the SLT] get very sort of irate if things go above their head sometimes and they say ‘hang on it’s got to go through me because otherwise it looks as though I’m sort of powerless’” (I4, T, SLT).

The above quotation also illustrates that the autocratic leadership is also believed to be eroding the power of other members of the SLT. Another member of the SLT perceived that this “level of micromanagement reflects a lack of trust” (I6, T, SLT). The same senior leader also offered explanation as to why this autocratic management style exists at the Academy.

“...there is a certain degree of fear that if people are given freedom, freedom to exercise their selves, exercise their knowledge, exercise their creatively, it could go wrong. And if it does go wrong, the school, the institution is back up the creek that it was six or seven years ago and my perspective is that six or seven years ago this place was very different. There is a different talent pool that exists here, there is a different pool of students that exists here. We’re in a different building, we’re a different time, the education landscape is different and people need to be give a bit of space to run with it. It is still a culture based, it is still anchored with fear” (I6, T, SLT).

4.7.2 Theme Eight - academic success

This theme explores the progress and results of students at the Academy.

4.7.2.1 Student Progress and Results

Staff with Management Responsibility

Concerns from an overwhelming majority of the SMR centred on the progress and results of students which encompassed a number of terms such as “achievement” (F2, T, SMR, 2), “aspiration” (F2,T, SMR, 1), “percentages” (F2, T, SMR, 4) and “passing exams; getting the grades” (F1, NT, SMR, 2). One SMR summarised these concerns as:

“...there’s that constant worry that they’re being judged on progress, the school’s being judged on progress, the funding is, in essence, progress. So they want to get the most progress. I think that underpins everything” (F5, T, SMR, 2).

One SMR commented that this results in decision making which is not in the best interest of the students.

“...a lot of the times they’re seen as commodities... I mean you know I’ve been in meetings where kids are suddenly taken out, after a certain period of time. Out of lessons or you know they’ve been in there for sixth months and they get rid of them from here. Or they’re shoved into certain subjects that they’ve never done at GCSE and they’re doing it at A Level, which I’ve had before. And it’s just like, well are they just seeing the pound sign over their head or are we actually thinking [about] what’s best for the children” (F1, T, SMR, 4).

Senior Leadership Team

Many of the SLT also emphasised the importance of student progress and results and that the systems in place at the Academy are designed to facilitate this. This is displayed in the following quote:

“There’s lots of systems and things in place to help you achieve that. Be they, after school revision classes, collapsed timetables or even when we go to the Saturday revision sessions. So the expectation is you’ll succeed and they’re things in place to help you reach that goal” (I3, T, SLT).

However one SLT member noted that the focus on student progress and results might not always be in the best interests of the students. One example offered was the Academy policy of early entry of exams:

“We’ve done a lot of things saying that they are in the best interest of our students which are often not in the best interest of our students and they are qualified by saying that they are in the best interest of our students... it is not good for the morale and doing the subject at a very early stage when they are not ready for it and you know that they’re not going to come out with a good grade. It’s not good for their confidence but it needed to be, it was just done. It was policy” (I6, T, SLT).

This led one senior leader to conclude that:

“Basically what we believe in is increasing the percentages every year. That’s fundamentally what we are driven by. But there again it might be the same in every school” (I1, T, SLT).

4.8 Cultural Web Element Four - organisational structures

This element explores the ‘organisational structures’ of the Academy. In relation to this element, participants were questioned as to what does the formal staffing structure, or the informal ways in which staff work at the Academy, reflect about the following: power

structures, what is important, and important relationships? The following themes were revealed: ‘formal constraints’ and ‘informal constraints’.

4.8.1 Theme Nine - formal constraints

This theme is divided into two sub-themes which will be explored: ‘totalitarian Vice Principal’ and ‘hierarchical and top heavy’.

4.8.1.1 Totalitarian Vice Principal

All Staff

All staff commented that they considered that the Academy was structured in such a way that the Vice Principal has almost total control. This viewpoint included a few of the SNR and an overwhelming majority of the SMR and the SLT, and was perceived to be at such a level that one member argued: “I don’t think the Principal knows half of what goes on in this school, I really don’t” (F1, NT, SMR, 3). Further elaboration on the Vice Principal’s leadership was provided by another focus group:

“Because she’s a control freak. I get on really well with her, but she would probably be one of the first to admit that she likes to make sure that she’s doing everything, and I think if whoever she’s working with isn’t doing it correctly or the way that she would do it, or quick enough, or at the right time, and I think she’d be very hard to work alongside” (F5, T, SMR, 2).

However another focus group noted that with absolute control and power came the possibility of abuse of this power:

“Well Margaret has got all of the power in the whole of the school over everybody. So if you screw her, you are screwed. I upset her, I filled in a bit of GCSE paper wrong. My timetable, no GCSE for the next two years. Like I was massively like rollocked secretly for that. Not outwardly just secretly. September came, ‘oh sorry we can’t fit any key stage four in your timetable this year. We will give it to the NQT who is always late’” (F4, T, SMR, 3).

There was agreement in the interviews, with the majority of senior leaders that the Vice Principal tried to enforce a degree of totalitarian control across the Academy so nothing can be actioned without her:

“I’m their line manager, if we need something I’ve got to go to Margaret still before something can happen. Whereas if they had Margaret as their line manager it would just happen” (I4, T, SLT).

Some members of the SLT identified issues with this type of leadership:

“I think there is a real- there is a serious issue, and a serious concern, that I don't think people feel empowered or trusted to develop themselves, and develop their roles, in the direction that they want to take, because so much ownership of the running of the school falls upon the shoulders of one person” (I7, T, SLT).

This was furthered by another member who outlined:

“If she gets run over by a bus then we’re up sh*t creek without a paddle because there is a lot that she carries in her head” (I6, T, SLT).

4.8.1.2 Hierarchical and Top Heavy

Senior Leadership Team

Despite the Vice Principal being identified as having elements of totalitarian control, an overwhelming majority of the SLT perceived the organisation to be quite hierarchical with organisational control resting with the Principal and then Vice Principal. This was stated as “...essentially- you've got the Principal, but fundamentally, I think the day-to-day running of the school is done by the Vice Principal” (I7, T, SLT). This is quite aptly described by another senior member, who utilises the feudal system as a metaphor:

“Well it’s a feudal pyramid. It reflects a feudal pyramid. You know the Principals at the top, but he’s not the king, he’s God. Right, because if he were the king he would be more hands on. He’s the ‘Supreme Being’ and the Vice Principal is the king because she’s more hands on. Nigel has never publically ever, in my time of knowing him, undermined his Vice Principal or contradicted them. There might have been the odd time where he’s come in and said stuff but he wouldn’t do that in the public forum. So the perceptions make it quite difficult actually, so the perception is that the Vice Principal has a free hand” (I2, T, SLT).

Staff with No Responsibility

However most of the SNR also agreed “power and decision making is with the SLT” (Q2, T, SNR) and thus shared across the senior team. This was agreed by another non-teaching SNR member who described the power of the Academy where “all decisions have to be finalised by senior leaders” (Q26, T, SNR). Thus despite many of the SLT feeling power is with the Vice Principal, many of the staff perceive power as being spread across the SLT and thus reflects how the Academy is deemed to be quite hierarchical in structure. However some noted issues with the staffing structure being “very top heavy” (Q10, T, SNR) and this

created issues in that only a small number of decisions “filter through e.g. HoDs” (Q3, T, SNR). This led one staff to conclude “those lower down don't have a say in how things are done” (Q4, T, SNR).

4.8.2 Theme Ten - informal constraints

This theme explores the prohibition of informal work at the Academy.

4.8.2.1 Informal Work Prohibited

Staff with Management Responsibility - teaching

Some of the teaching SMR contended that informal work and initiatives are prohibited at the Academy. “You would like to think you could, but if it's not agreed, if somebody else finds out and then [they think] it's not suitable, then you, you know, you are busted for it basically” (F3, T, SMR, 5). This was elaborated on by one SMR:

“I think because there are so many constraints, you can't take year 11 out of lessons, and you can't do this, you can't do that. I think people have just stopped having those initiatives of, ‘this is coming up’, because you start going, ‘well, they're probably not going to be allowed out’, or, ‘that's not the right time’, ‘I haven't got enough budget’” (F5, T, SMR, 2).

Explanation for the prohibition on informal work was also offered by one SMR who noted issues in asking the Vice Principal and also pressure on focusing upon students' grades:

“It's finding time to go and see Margaret, and you'll walk in and go, ‘today's not a good day to ask her, if we can have money for this or do this trip’. So I think there is still some of it, but I think it's dwindling, because there's so many pressures. We all

have to focus on getting the kids the grades. I think it's harder to do the other stuff”
(F5, T, SMR, 2).

Senior Leadership Team – teaching

Some of the teaching SLT also agreed that informal work is prohibited at the Academy: “I don't think you are allowed to be informal, I don't think our structure leads itself to that. I think we're Soviet in that respect, if it doesn't conform [then] it is a threat” (I2, T, SLT). One possible reason for the reduction in informal work was offered by this senior leader who suggested that bureaucracy slowed any potential informal opportunities:

“...sometimes it is a paper exercise and sometimes because you just need to circumnavigate through the system to get what you want, in order that students make significant progress, because the system will slow you down; red tape” (I10, T, SLT)

Whilst another member of the SLT felt that “within certain departments that I've been privy to then yes, there have been politics at play, which have had beneficial and deleterious effects on those departments” (I8, T, SLT). Consequently, internal politics have impacted stakeholders' willingness to work informally. One explanation for this is provided by this senior leader who discussed the change in staff type:

“**SLT 4:** I think that's perhaps due to the perception of current staff. And the fact that 'oh they're a doctor you know and oh they've come from this'. I think there's a little bit of resentment from, you I know that I've sort of felt a little bit about Teach First and stuff. Just because they've got a better qualification than me that doesn't mean they are going to be better in the classroom. That's quite an insulting assumption, but you know that in six weeks they can do what has taken me a year to do” (I4, T, SLT).

4.9 Cultural Web Element Five - control system

This element examines the ‘control systems’ of the Academy. For this section participants were questioned about what the formalised control systems, such as measurements and reward, monitor? The following themes emerged: ‘performance management’ and ‘student and staff reward’.

4.9.1 Theme Eleven -performance management

This theme explores performance management at the Academy which relates to ‘staff assessment methods’.

4.9.1.1 Staff Assessment Methods

All Staff

All staff discussed the “outcome of exam results” (F3, T, SMR, 2) as a key data measurement for staff, which is monitored by the Academy performance management system. This included many of the SMR and the SNR, who shared that the Academy is “highly data driven” (Q45, NT, SNR). The rationale for this relates to Ofsted, with one teacher commenting that “to show clear progress suggests that passing future Ofsted inspection is the most important” (Q21, T, SNR). Consequently, the impact of poor progress and results were discussed by the SLT:

“I think there is a branding that that happens, a labelling that happens. Where you’re perceived as being particularly poor if you’re not getting positive results from groups and that badge sometimes sticks or stays too long” (I6, T, SLT).

Pressure to improve failing exam results was also discussed by another senior leader who suggested that there could be “pressures so intolerable staff might want to leave and go elsewhere” (I3, T, SLT). Another member of the SLT also suggested that the focus on results can create “animosity sometimes between staff. Because they know ‘well it’s alright for them because they’ve got a top set. It’s alright for them because they’ve got an option subject’” (I4, T, SLT). Whilst one SLT member also noted that their performance management had nothing to do with their pastoral responsibility and indeed they have received no training to help their teaching:

“...my performance management for example doesn’t depend on how strong I am pastorally. It depends on my delivery in the classroom and there’s been no development in that area, at all, for a very very long time... and I’d imagine that’s no different to a whole raft of people in this Academy and probably in other schools, because of the role that they’re caught in this trap and this cycle and that is frustrating” (I2, T, SLT).

However one member of the SLT suggested that increased accountability was apparent in education as a whole: “that’s where sometimes there is an issue because the data sometimes doesn’t tell the whole story, the true picture” (I10, T, SLT).

Finally, a few of the SNR and some of the SLT also discussed the process of lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny, which are also utilised to assess staff at the Academy. Subsequently, one member of the SLT concluded:

“There seems to be quite a lot, in terms of the observations. Again I don’t know how it compares to other places, but you’ve got people doing the formal observations. But

then the learning walks, walking around seeing how people are a doing and taking learning from that. But I'm sure that when that happens there's an element of obsession there" (I5, NT, SLT).

Counterproductively, one senior member agreed this type of assessment was in fact inconsequential.

"...instead of value, judgement numbers, lesson numbers. And it's still you, people have sort of said, 'well it doesn't really matter now what the lesson is like, because the fact of the matter is if my progress is good no one really cares'" (I4, T, SLT).

4.9.2 Theme Twelve - student and staff reward

This theme explores the reward system for both students and staff at the Academy. Students were identified as having various rewards at the Academy whilst the only substantial staff reward was pay.

4.9.2.1 Various Student Reward

All Staff

All staff discussed the various types of student reward that exist at the Academy. An overwhelming majority of the SMR and the SLT discussed the Vivo system (electronic student reward system); however some SMR noted issues with this system, such as it not being reviewed for its success: "nobody's looking at really, how successful it's been and should we be reviewing it? Well yeah we should, for exactly that reason. There's no measure" (F2, T, SMR, 2). This was particularly deemed an issue for one senior leader since "we're spending a fortune for this system that we're not really using effectively" (I7, T, SLT).

Other rewards discussed included award evenings and assemblies, which were explored by an overwhelming majority of the SMR. However again problems were identified relating back to the previously identified totalitarian control theme of the Vice Principal:

“Margaret chooses [the students] based on the data, because a lot of the Heads of Department, I’ve heard, have been up in arms in the past and I’ve actually heard them say that they had no idea that these students, that have been nominated for their award, were in the running at all” (F1, NT, SMR, 2).

Other reward methods included student vouchers, praise postcards, prom and discos. This led one SMR to conclude that whilst it’s “important to be seen to have a reward system, what’s not important [to the SLT] is whether it’s working on the ground level” (F2, T, SMR, 2). Further criticism was also provided by another member of the SLT who stated the Academy control systems are geared more towards controlling poor behaviour than rewarding good behaviour.

“Well obviously from a student perspective it’s all about the stick, rather than carrot. I mean the behaviour system, lots of money is pumped into it in order to get it ticking over. Whereas the Vivos system is sort of like a poor cousin and they always have been. There is an attempt through things like the House system and assemblies and events and things to try and lighten it up a bit. But you’re swimming against the tide because even they have to. Anything that you do has to fit around the edges of the institution. This giant liner going through the ocean and you want to go out in a little kayak” (I2, T, SLT).

4.9.2.2 Fiscal Staff Reward Only

All Staff - teaching

All staff concurred that there was no perceived staff reward with the exception of pay. This was agreed by an overwhelming majority of both the SMR and the SLT, and a few of the SNR. One SMR concluded that pay was used as a retention method: “they’ll bribe you with something to make you stay, to make it difficult to leave” (F3, T, SMR, 1). This was sustained by a member of the SLT who confirmed pay was used to help enforce conformity:

“They’re retained through it, but I think staff know they’re paid well. So for instance if you go look at the job market out there, look at the Time Educational Supplement (TES)... Look at what we’re getting paid for the top range or above for the equivalent role at another school for any role. So you know, you can’t complain if you’re taking home the money can you?” (I1, T, SLT).

However another SMR concluded that given the numbers of hours they work the pay was not overly generous.

“I would say that in terms of still my hourly rate, it is still shocking, because I was awake until 2am last night, plodding along with stuff. Get up at 6am and I will be there again doing the same thing. I would rather earn less money and have a bit more time” (F4, T, SMR, 1).

Whilst another member of the SLT suggested that paying staff generously can lead to feelings of being trapped and stale.

“When we see promise at young staff level we reward through salaries, and we make people feel valued that way, but that can quickly grow stale with people, I think. If

you start people off quite high, and [you] pay them a lot of money, where do they go?
People can start to feel trapped” (I7, T, SLT).

Staff with Management Responsibility – non-teaching

The non-teaching SMR identified no reward, even fiscal, for non-teaching staff and this was argued to be because performance management is not utilised with them. However, since non-teaching staff don’t have class results which can be used to assess performance, the issue for these stakeholders is “how do you measure that you’re doing a good job?” (I5, NT, SLT).

4.10 Cultural Web Element Six - rituals and routines

This element examines the ‘rituals and routines’ of the Academy. Participants were questioned what are the routine ways that staff behave towards each other and what do the rituals of Academy life, such as training programmes, promotion and assessment, point to what is important in the Academy? From examination, the following themes were generated: ‘staff promotion’, ‘staff socialisation’ and ‘staff training’.

4.10.1 Theme Thirteen - staff promotions

This theme explores the staff ‘promotion criteria and selection’.

4.10.1.1 Promotion Criteria and Selection

All Staff

All staff considered promotions to be preferentially based, with an overwhelming majority of SMR contending that promotions are based upon “being friends with the right people” (F5, T, SMR, 2). This was further elaborated by another focus group who suggested that when

internal promotions become available, the person who is going to fill those positions has already been decided:

“**SMR 2:** I think to a certain degree by law you have to offer it out, don’t you? But they have already got people in mind” (F4, T, SMR2).

Many of the SLT also discussed preferential based promotions; however they perceived promotions as being pre-decided by the Principal and Vice Principal.

“**SLT 4:** I think a lot of that is to do with personal relationships. I think it’s to do with, perhaps, if you’re perceived to be in favour with the front and I think that is sadly the case. Or out of favour, equally you know, right they won’t get it because, you know, they annoyed somebody last term probably. But I think that’s true.” (I4, T, SLT).

This is furthered by Senior Leader 2 who provided a specific example:

“I think there’s an element of where your face has to fit and you have to... where the power is in the school, you have to be seen by the Principal or the Vice Principal, they have to value you. I take a perfect case; I know going back a few years there was one curriculum area that was particularly poor... An individual who contributed a tremendous amount to turning round that curriculum by producing new schemes and working with colleagues in that area, ran for a position and was overlooked because basically he was invisible to the Principal... And someone else was appointed who was a nice person but actually in terms of what they’d contributed in real terms to the Academy probably hadn’t actually demonstrated that same degree of commitment” (I2, T, SLT).

Promotions were also perceived as preferential by the SNR and some outlined that “some staff are promoted without an interview” (Q26, T, SNR). A further example of this was provided by this member of the SLT, who suggested this current practice creates resentment amongst other colleagues:

“SLT 4: ...Frank. He sort of moved up out of his job and sort of became an Assistant Vice Principal.

Interviewer: By proxy?

SLT 4: By proxy yeah and it just sort of slid into place and people were like ‘oh is that’s happening now?’ And I think that can build up quite a lot of resentment” (I4, T, SLT).

Aside from promotions being decided by the Principal and Vice Principal, promotions were also discussed by some of the focus groups as a method of staff retention.

“It’s a golden handcuff isn’t it, because he (the Principal) throws money at people that have just started...so for me to leave now, I’ve got to go for a position that is much higher to get more money” (F2, T, SMR, 1).

As a result of this, one focus group concluded that some staff “are promoted too early” (F4, T, SMR, 3). However some staff also noted that deserving people could also be promoted and this was usually based upon those willing to work hard and long hours.

“I think people who have demonstrated that they equally are willing to go above and beyond when it comes to work hours as well. I mean I know some people who have

been promoted quite quickly, who from what I've heard do the jobs very well, but they are also up at 11 o'clock, midnight, still sending work emails and still working. There are obviously people who are willing to perhaps forego an element of, you know, personal social life" (F2, T, SMR, 1).

4.10.2 Theme Fourteen - staff socialisation

This theme explores the mixed socialisation of staff at the Academy.

4.10.2.1 Mixed Social Interaction

All Staff

All staff agreed that stakeholders at the Academy are generally friendly. This included an overwhelming majority of the SMR, SLT, and many of the SNR. However variations in politeness were noticed by the SMR. For instance one focus group considered staff from the old school to be politer than new Academy staff. "I think the staff that have been here for some time do [say hello], like the old school style staff do" (F4, T, SMR, 3). Whilst another focus group suggested: "lower levels of staff are polite and friendly than more senior staff" (F1, NT, SMR, 2). This was agreed by one SNR who suggested "there is a difference [in the politeness] between some of the SLT and teachers" (Q4, T, SNR). An explanation for this was provided by a member of the SLT who stated "I probably have found it quite difficult to get to the staff room and perhaps have that time with staff, which I think is a shame, but it's the role, isn't it?" (I9, T, SLT). Further reasons for poor socialisation were provided by one focus group who contended that the lack of a staff room in the new build was a factor which has negatively impacted socialisation.

"...a lot of the departments are together and separate [from other departments]. So there is actually no reason why you need to go and spend any time with Science, or

you need to go and talk to Maths, because they keep themselves to themselves, because there is not a staff space anymore and you don't actually pass. So in the corridor when you walk past, you don't know who they are" (F4, T, SMR, 4).

Issues with the building design prohibiting socialisation were acknowledged by many of the SLT, particularly since there are staff work rooms which are often occupied by departments.

"The building doesn't always lend itself well to staff gatherings. You know to having time to sit down and eat and chat, not really. Just the layout and the rooms that are on offer aren't particularly appealing. So there's not much time for sort of getting together and people are isolated in their own little areas and I think the work rooms haven't helped either" (I3, T, SLT).

One manager indeed felt that the occupation of work rooms by departments made it "intimidating" (F4, T, SMR, 3).

High staff turnover was also identified to be a factor in inhibiting socialising, as one staff commented "there are members of staff that I do not know" (Q26, T, SNR). This was furthered by a member of the SLT:

"I'd say in the last year or so there's been a lot of new faces around and it is been an influx of staff. Maybe a wave of incoming staff with GTPs, NQTs, new staff, new teachers. And so, I guess as a person myself I speak to everyone but we're not a school where you can say that you know everyone, or that you know the name of everyone. And that's may be back to the socialising side. And maybe that's coming from the top again, that maybe the leaders don't like that" (I6, T, SLT).

One final factor that contributed to the reduction in socialisation was offered by the following senior leader, who considered that the “rolling breaks and rolling lunches prevents the staff body from creating too much camaraderie” (I1, T, SLT).

4.10.3 Theme Fifteen - staff training

This theme explores the ‘continuing professional development’ which staff receive.

4.10.3.1 Continuing Professional Development

Staff with Management Responsibility

An overwhelming majority of the SMR agreed that minimal continuing professional development is offered. For instance one SMR concluded “I haven’t gone out for training in years” (F1, NT, SMR, 1). This was stated as a change since becoming an Academy: “they are few and far between though aren’t they, whereas in the old days, you’d get at least one a year” (F3, T, SMR, 3). One reason identified, was that teachers were no longer allowed to miss lessons with exam groups: “stopped asking. We get told, ‘you can’t miss key exam groups’, which pretty much means never” (F5, T, SMR, 2). One solution offered by a SMR was to do training “online in your own time” (F3, T, SMR, 2) after school, as a means of circumventing this issue. Whilst another suggestion was to do training in your own time outside of the Academy, however one member noted “the issue is funding the training” (F3, T, SMR, 3).

Senior Leadership Team

An overwhelming majority of the senior leaders verbalised they are offered minimal external training. Whilst one member of the SLT had “no idea” (I1, T, SLT) who is permitted to go on external training is decided. An answer to this was provided by another senior leader who posited that “those in the inner sanctum” (I10, T, SLT) decide, which refers to the three or

four members of SLT that are involved in the strategic decision making for the Academy. One senior member contended that this results in feeling of frustration, particularly since external training was a target resulting from their performance management observation:

“I’ve been on one course in the last four years and that was this year. That’s quite frustrating because I’ve just done my peer observation thing and the person giving me feedback said ‘it’s all a bit mute really because you’re not going to get any training on it anyway” (I4, T, SLT).

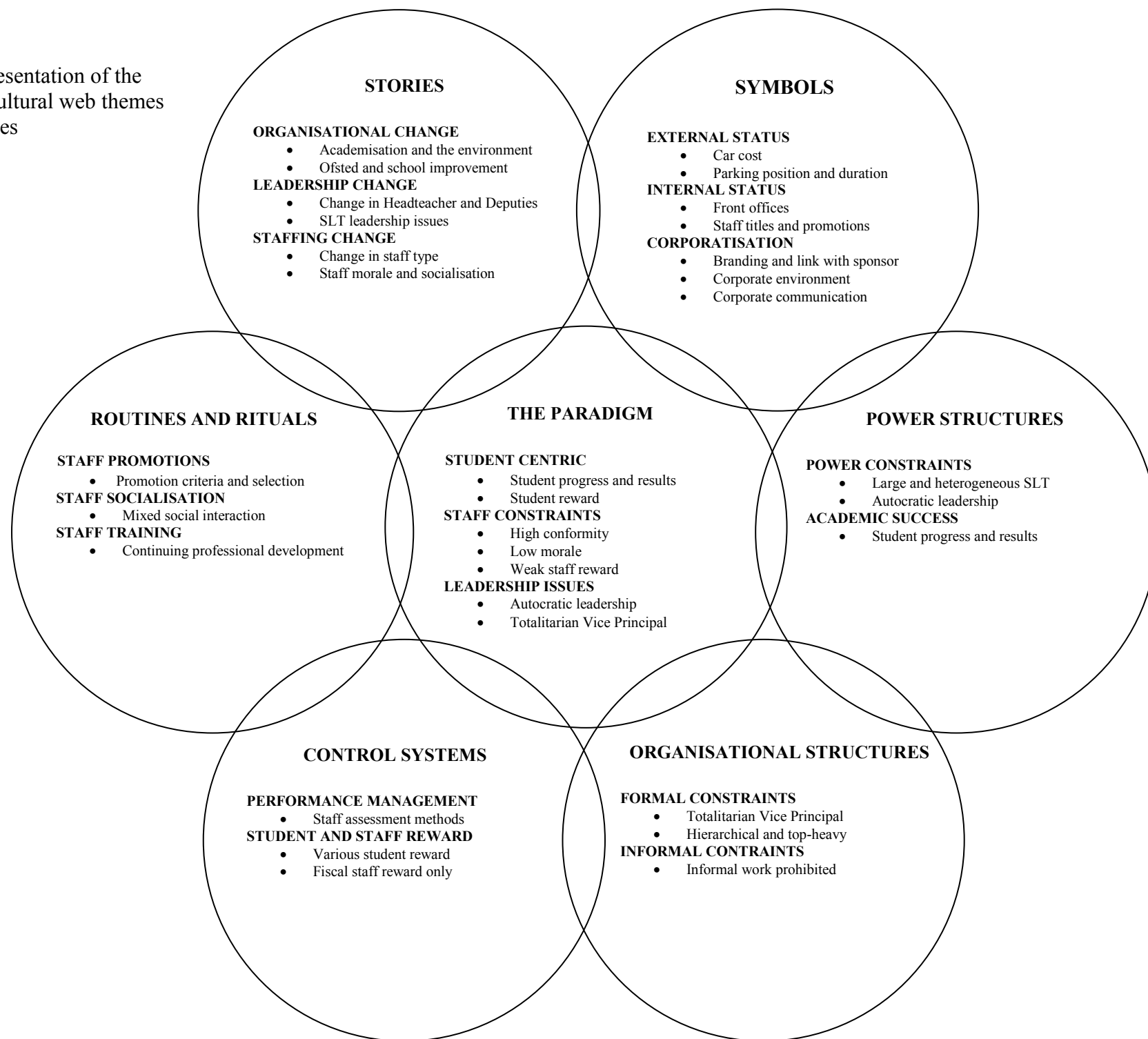
4.11 Summary of the Cultural Web (Element Seven) - the paradigm

In summary, the final element of the cultural web establishes the ‘paradigm’ of the Academy. This is the set of assumptions, which are held in common and taken for granted, in the Academy and can be seen across a number of elements of the cultural web. In summarising the paradigm, the following are presented as key components of its culture: ‘student centric’, ‘staff constraints’ and ‘leadership issues’. In first exploring the student centric nature of the Academy, evidence of this can be viewed in the emphasis on student progress, results and reward, which were identified in the ‘power structures’ and ‘control systems’ of the Academy’s cultural web. Next, in discussing staff constraints, these are noted as being derived from the high degree of enforced conformity, low level of staff morale and the weak staff reward system at the Academy. Evidence of this was identified in the ‘stories’, ‘symbols’ and ‘routines and rituals’ of the Academy’s cultural web. Finally, leadership issues were outlined and noted as deriving from the autocratic leadership and the totalitarian Vice Principal, which were evidenced in the ‘power structures’ and ‘organisational structures’ of the Academy. In concluding the cultural web of the Academy, the summary of this chapter will now be discussed.

4.12 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has presented the findings from the three methods of data collection for the Academy settings: the focus group on staff with management responsibility, the interviews on the Senior Leadership Team and the questionnaire given to staff without responsibility. This has facilitated the comparison of three hierarchical groups of staff at the Academy and has aided in considering research question two. It has also explored the variations between teacher and non-teacher responses and once again this has assisted in addressing research question two. The analysis of all stakeholders' responses has produced a set of themes and sub-themes which have been generated into one cultural web for the Academy. In summary of this chapter, the cultural web of the Academy, including themes and sub-themes, is presented below. The next chapter will now focus upon completing research question two with a discussion of the findings and also attempts to answer research question three: what are the Academy's organisational culture targets for whole school development to ensure long term sustainability?

Figure 3 –
A visual representation of the
Academy's cultural web themes
and sub-themes



CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

“...should result in a deeper understanding of the situation, and a “new” practical theory that can extend existing understanding” (Altrichter *et al.*, 2008, p.159).

The purpose of this chapter is to facilitate a discussion of the findings identified in the previous chapter and fully consider research question two. In order to provide a clear structure to this section, each theme which was generated from the cultural web, will be addressed in turn. In an effort to construct meaningful discussion, answers from all stakeholders’ responses will be supplemented with the knowledge acquired from the literature review and methodology chapters. By combining these perspectives I also intend to answer research question three: what are the Academy’s organisational culture targets for whole school development to ensure long term sustainability? This will offer evidence of how this research, and the cultural web model, can be employed by other researchers and educational leaders to potentially assess the organisational culture of other academies and identify targets for suggested organisational improvement. A more detailed plan, of specific Academy improvement targets, can be found in appendix 11 and this offers additional discussion in support of answering research question three.

5.2 Cultural Web Element One - stories

As previously discussed, the findings connected to this element explore the ‘stories’ which come to mind when thinking about the Academy’s history. From discussion of these areas the following themes emerged: ‘organisational change’, ‘leadership change’ and ‘staffing change’.

5.2.1 Theme One - organisational change

The first area of this theme centres on the process of academisation of the school and the implications this may have had on stakeholders. The second area relates to the impact of Ofsted upon the Academy and the school improvement that has taken place.

5.2.1.1 Academisation and the Environment

A key story in relation to this theme was the number of organisational changes which have had a significant impact on all stakeholders at the Academy. The first aspect of this was the academisation process and subsequent transition into the new build. For most of the SMR, this related to the apprehension and uncertainty surrounding the environmental change and what that meant for those working at the Academy. Issues cited included the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) across to Academy contracts and the feelings of trepidation with regards to a new sponsor. The concern of the sponsor was more prevalent with the SLT who had varied opinions on how beneficial the sponsor would be to the Academy. Opposition surrounding academisation is affirmed by Leo *et al.* (2010) who assert that it is based on the ideology that publically funded services should not be transferred to the private sector and under the leadership of those who may have personal agendas and do not have educational expertise. An example of the latter is discussed by Pike (2009) who examined the Emmanuel Schools Foundation (ESF). The ESF sponsored four schools and was chaired by Sir Peter Vardy, a man who was known for owning the most profitable independent car retailer in Europe rather than for managing schools. In light of this example, it is perhaps understandable why some staff at the Academy might have been concerned about the changes that academisation might bring and the influence of people who have no educational expertise. Further, Sinnott (2008) discusses that the leading teaching union, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), opposes academies because of the governing power

given to unaccountable sponsoring bodies. The resistance of unions to academisation is also agreed by Leo *et al.* (2010) who later note that all unions went on record as opposing academies. A great deal of statements and research was therefore generated which signalled either modification or direct opposition to the Academies Programme (Gunter, 2011). This rhetoric may have filtered down to staff in the school and impacted some staffs' perceptions of academisation. However, given the main sponsor for the Academy under investigation had a history of education management, it is likely many concerns may have been eased. Yet some apprehension may have still remained regarding the agenda of the main sponsor, particularly since Sinnott (2008) contends that the governance structure of academies allows sponsors to dominate the governing body and therefore take the lead in its strategy and decision making. This is agreed by Bisschoff and Gibson (2012) who note that sponsors can take a lead in creating the vision of the academy, with some being more autocratic than others. It may therefore have been beneficial for the main sponsor to outline its agenda, which is developed and shared with staff. This is agreed by Kotter (1996) and Senior (2002) who advocates that developing a shared vision and communicating that vision to staff can be an effective method in reducing resistant forces to change. Although, it is acknowledged that this recommendation would have been most beneficial before academisation and so this not included as a current target for the Academy.

5.2.1.2 Ofsted and School Improvement

Prior to academisation the school received a grading of 'Notice to Improve' (NTI) from Ofsted which was perceived by one stakeholder as unfair. The question of the fairness of school inspections is discussed by Gaertner and Pant (2011) who assert that the issue of the validity of school inspections has yet to be addressed. Although Gaertner *et al.* (2013) later discuss that inspections are objective data-based evaluations, which employ a variety of

methods (for example, lesson observation, questionnaires, and interviews) in order to deliver a valid judgement. Thus it is not clear how far the validity of the inspection can be called into question and whether the one stakeholder's view of unfairness are replicated in other stakeholder views and those staff that had direct interface with the Ofsted Inspectors. Nonetheless, the NTI grading may have been a factor as to why the school was perceived as underperforming and subsequently identified as a school for academy conversion. This is considered by Abbott *et al.* (2013) who outlines that the 2002 Education Act enabled failing schools with low levels of achievement, and in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, to become academies. The impact of the conversion and role of the main sponsor may be perceived as a factor which has aided school improvement and has been a catalyst for new Academy extracurricular events. However one member of the SLT advocated that school improvements had actually begun before academisation.

The question as to how far academies improve achievement is queried by Gorard (2014), whom after examining the Annual School Census, the Department for Education School Performance Tables 2004–2012 and the National Pupil Database, found no convincing evidence that Academies are any more (or less) effective than local authority schools with equivalent intakes. Abbott *et al.* (2013) contend that academies were seen as a fresh start with new leadership. This is agreed by Bisschoff and Mackenzie-Batterbury (2013) who note that academies could be used to overcome negative views held regarding the predecessor school. However the Academy of this study did not have new leadership, as the Principal had been in post before academisation. This does again question how far academisation can be attributed with the school's improvement. Although Abbott *et al.* (2013) do note that schools that became academies following the Education Act (2002) received significant investments from sponsors and central government, which also included a new building. This is furthered by

Francis (2015) who noted that the Building Schools for the Future scheme, from which sponsored academies were typically beneficiaries, was a means of aiding schools in areas of deprived socio-economic areas. It may therefore be reasonable to assume that this capital and infrastructure helped continue and sustain improvements, which may otherwise not have been possible. In summary, no matter how accurate Ofsted's grading of the NTI for the Academy was, since the Headteacher did not change following academisation of the school, it is likely improvements had started before the school became an Academy. Although it may also be fair to conclude that the investment, financially and through the Building Schools for the Future scheme (2004), will have aided continued improvement which may have otherwise stalled or been inhibited.

5.2.2 Theme Two - leadership change

This theme examines the 'change in Headteacher and Deputies' and the 'SLT leadership issues' which were identified at the Academy.

5.2.2.1 Change in Headteacher and Deputies

These stories suggest that the Academy leadership has seen a redirection of foci following the pre-academisation change of the Headteacher (who became Principal) and two Deputies (which became one Vice Principal). In particular, the leadership has been modified from being centred upon staff satisfaction, for instance by way of gifts and reward meals, to now being very student orientated. This leadership change was also deemed to have had a positive impact on student behaviour and achievement, which were now noted as being much better by staff. The importance of leadership is also supported by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who advocate that it is fundamental to a school's success. This again supports the argument in the previous section that improvements at the Academy had begun with the change of

leadership and not at the start of academisation. Bush (2011) also discusses the specific requirements of education and one of those is the perception that children are the clients of educational institutions. Thus the emphasis on the Academy as being student orientated is effective at positioning the students as the main focus of the Academy and helping to refocus staff on the achievements of those students. However, Smith and Riley (2012) offer a modified position, they espouse that successful school leadership is about supporting both students and staff. Bush and Glover (2014) also agree that successful leadership is concerned in engaging with both staff and students. It is therefore a recommendation that the Academy leadership is modified with a more even balance of leadership being orientated towards the needs of both staff and students. This aligns with Leithwood *et al.* (2004), who state that leadership is second only to teaching, in relation to the impact it can have on student learning and performance. Thus it is important that both teachers and students are at the centre of leadership foci so teaching can be at its most effective. One strategy of engaging staff may be to re-initiate some of the staff reward schemes which were eliminated in the change in leadership. The importance of staff reward is supported by Barile *et al.* (2012) who suggest that if used appropriately teacher reward can actually improve teacher effectiveness. This is advanced by Dee and Wyckoff (2015) who notes that supporting teacher incentives can drive improvements in student outcomes by encouraging high performing teachers to join or remain at a school.

5.2.2.2 SLT Leadership Issues

In addition to a new Headteacher (who became Principal) and a new Vice Principal, changes were made to the Senior Leadership Team following academisation. However there was a perceived negative association with the SLT's leadership of the SMR they supervised, which was suggested to be inconsistent and unresponsive. This was at such a point where some

SMR, had decided not to report issues to the SLT but instead tried to deal with matters on their own. The importance of a two-way relationship between senior leaders and department managers is posited by Harris and Muijs (2005) who contend that a positive relationship between middle and senior management is required in order to improve learning outcomes for students. This is furthered by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who advocate that the inability to engage with those staff you manage is a characteristic of unsuccessful leadership. This is particularly pertinent, since engagement is needed in order to achieve commitment from the SMR and accomplish the vision of the Academy. Tubin (2015), when examining seven successful schools with high academic outcomes, also argues for the importance of building a SLT which can effectively implement the vision of the Principal. Consequently, if the SLT has not been strategically selected, for instance due to recruitment issues, or the vision has not been successfully disseminated by the Principal, then this might impact the success of the school.

In examining the inconsistent and unresponsive leadership from the SLT in more detail, this might indicate that the Principal's vision has not been effectively shared to the SLT. Consequently, this may be inhibiting their responses to staff, since they may be unsure of the organisational trajectory. The importance of this is agreed by Griego *et al.* (2002), who argue that a shared vision provides members of an organisation with a direction by which to navigate and thus aids in decision making. Furthermore, according to Senge (2006) the creation of a talented team requires the effective dissemination of a shared vision. Therefore the efficacy of the Academy's SLT may be reduced if a shared vision has not been adequately conveyed and agreed. A recommendation would be for the Principal to spend time developing an agreed and shared vision with the leadership team so that their decision making has consensus and an agreed strategic trajectory. Coleman and Earley (2005) also

suggest that successful educational leadership relies on sharing a vision and, in order to make this vision lasting, it must be linked to one's values; whilst Bisschoff and Watts (2013) add to this discussion and also stress the importance of persistence in establishing and maintaining a shared vision. In summary, Boyatzis *et al.* (2015) espouse that in order for a vision to lead to a sustained and desired change it must be based on an ideal self which is fundamentally linked with a person's core identity, values, goals, and aspirations. It would therefore be advisable that the Principal's vision is linked to their values for the ideal Academy they wish to aspire for. In summary, the above reflects that not all the changes following academisation have been successful, particularly in relation to staff management. Although as previously noted, there seems to have been much greater success in relation to student outcomes.

5.2.3 Theme Three - staffing change

This theme is separated into the 'change in the staff type' and 'staff morale and socialisation' at the Academy.

5.2.3.1 Change in Staff Type

The change in staff type was a prominent story and suggests there has been a significant adjustment in the type of teachers employed at the Academy, with a noticeable proliferation of conformity. This was noticed by both the SMR and the SLT and was considered to be due to a combination of the result of increased accountability at the Academy and pressures from central government. This is agreed by Hayes (2001) who argues there is a great deal of pressure upon teachers to conform to government demands, such as increased accountability, testing and bureaucracy. This view is continued by Roberts and Graham (2008) who posit that the requirements of central government, the imperative of successful curriculum delivery and rigorous inspection forces are a cocktail which can result in both increased conformity

and centralisation. Although Roberts and Graham's (2008) study examined teacher trainees and it is therefore unclear whether these forces would have the same impact on established teachers, who would have been privy to a great range of governmental change and initiatives over their careers. In summary, this quotation from Hayes (2001) is offered as a position this researcher aligns to and is one that effectively describes the impact of conformity, from central government, upon the teaching profession: "If England wishes to produce conformist practitioners with an assembly-worker mentality, then the next generation of teachers, dazed by constant change and mesmerised by endless pages of check lists and forms, should fit the bill nicely" (Hayes, 2001, p.49).

The staff group also noticed a number of departures of key staff personalities who were known for being more idiosyncratic and memorable. This is agreed by Macdonald (1993, cited Goldstein, 2005) who identifies the stressor of conformity as a factor in making teaching arduous and overwhelming and thus may play a role in teacher retention. However the departure of staff included both teachers who were retiring and those who were moving onto other schools and away from the Academy. It may therefore be that the increased conformity has not just come from external governmental pressure but changes in the leadership of the Academy. This is agreed by Robbins (2005) who advocates that there is considerable evidence that some organisations and groups can apply formidable pressure for members to adhere to group norms. Furthermore, Mullins (2005) discusses the negative effects of the pressures on individuals to conform to the group which can be at the expense of minority ideas, as well as adversely effecting group performance. Thus the pressure on staff to conform may be inhibiting the progress of the Academy. It is therefore a recommendation that steps are taken to reduce the expectations of conformity so that minority and alternate views may be considered or embraced. Tayler and Bloomfield (2011) offers two possibilities

for reducing conformity: providing strong incentives for the staff to deviate their behaviour or having agents who have more heterogeneous personal norms. It is therefore advised that the leadership team explicitly seek out minority responses and when necessary reward them with verbal praise, or encourage more staff creativity at the Academy. However Zolloman (2010) earlier noted that there can be positive gains from conformist behaviour, in that members that conform can sometimes fair better than relying solely on their own judgement alone. It is therefore important that a balance is struck, in that staff are able to conform when necessary but they also have the freedom to explore individual views when warranted.

Further changes in the staff type were also identified by the non-teaching SMR. They discussed increases in job qualification requirements with new non-teacher SMR tending to be graduates and this has led many to conclude they would not be appointed in their current roles if they had to apply again now. This may also have the effect of negatively impacting their perceived value and worth to the organisation. One way to address this issue might be by offering greater training to non-teaching SMR. This is agreed by Burnes (2004) who notes effective training can help boost an employee's skills and competence which can in turn improve their value to the organisation. Although Bush and Middlewood (2013) recognise that often non-teaching staffs' training needs are neglected, which is primarily focused on teachers. In light of this, personalised training should be given to support staff which is not focused on teaching staff (Flynn *et al.*, 2016). It is therefore another recommendation that a programme of tailored training is initiated for non-teaching staff at the Academy.

5.2.3.2 Staff Morale and Socialisation

The previously mentioned increases in conformity at the Academy may also be a contributing factor in staff morale, which was perceived as being low by the SMR. A key concern related

to the worry of being punished, with penalties ranging from being reprimanded following meetings, to being threatened with redundancy or allotted heavy timetables. This may again provide support for the idea that conformity at the Academy is enforced by management strategies as opposed to governmental forces. Petrick and Manning (1990 cited Mullins 2005) argue that morale cannot be improved without management showing welfare for their staff. The worry of being punished by the SLT is therefore contrary to showing care for the SMR at the Academy. Whilst Robbins (2005) notes punishment can be a necessary part of management and is employed to improve employee performance, positive reinforcement can also be used for the same purpose and in some cases it can be much more effective. It would therefore be a recommendation that the Academy management strategy is modified so that there is a more even distribution of negative and positive reinforcement. This is affirmed by Wei and Yazdanifard (2014) who argue that positive reinforcement can be effective at increasing staff motivation and effectiveness. Examples of positive reinforcement at the Academy might include verbal praise for constructive feedback during meetings, or written letters from the Principal praising staff for good attendance or performance.

Although the low morale was not identified by the SLT and the SNR, the senior leaders did report a reduction in socialisation opportunities at the Academy. This may also correspond with the increased conformity and reduction of key staff personalities, who may have socialised more or have been the topic of conversation. This consequently led to the organisation being described by one member of the SLT as being less humanistic and more bureaucratic. Mullins (2005) suggests that informal relations and socialisation plays a powerful role within organisations. This is contextualised by Cherubini (2009) who suggests that teacher socialisation is an important part of a school's culture and helps develop cohesive relations, particularly for helping new teachers acclimatise to their school, for instance by

attending staff social events. Thus the reduced socialisation at the Academy will have had a negative impact on staff relationships and particularly the success of new teachers. It is therefore a recommendation that regular time is made to facilitate staff socialisation. This is agreed by Berman *et al.* (2002) who suggests organisational socialisation and friendships can be improved through teamwork, social events and management training on establishing trusting relationships with subordinates. Examples that might be included at the Academy could be staff social events each term, time reserved on training days for team building activities and training given to the SLT on how to build effective and trusting relationships with the SMR.

5.3 Cultural Web Element Two - symbols

Findings connected to this element explore the key symbolic aspects which represent the nature of the Academy. Participants were asked to discuss the following symbols: logos, offices, cars, titles, language and terminology. Following examination of the data collected, these subsequent themes were generated: ‘external status’, ‘internal status’ and ‘corporatisation’.

5.3.1 Theme Four - external status

The first part of this theme explores the staff car cost, including the variation in the type and make of car which were owned by different stakeholders at the Academy. The second part considers the ‘parking position and duration’ of onsite staff cars.

5.3.1.1 Car Cost

Symbols examined in the area of external status show that the variation in car choice and cost is noted by most of the SMR and many of the SLT at the Academy. For instance the Principal

was discussed as having a modest car, whilst other members of the SLT were observed as having both inexpensive and expensive cars. Car cost was particularly noticed by the non-teaching SNR who only identified more luxurious cars when compared to their teaching counterparts. This was further elaborated on by one member of the SLT who was non-teaching based and noted that in their previous private sector profession, car type and cost was associated with status. In particular the higher one progressed in the organisational hierarchy, the better and the more expensive car they owned. This is agreed by Dunn and Searle (2010) who espouse that a person's car is a symbol of their status. The fact the Principal and some other members of the SLT have more modest cars may help reduce external status barriers between management and subordinates. This is furthered by Lahetro and Risku (2014) who when examining a comprehensive school in Finland, contended that one reason a unified culture was created was by the Principal establishing a feeling of equality at the school. This was achieved in part by the Principal having a modest non-branded car and no designated parking space of their own. It may therefore be a recommendation that owning a modest car is advised to other members of the SLT when making future purchases. Although it is recognised that advising the SLT on car choice is obviously quite a contentious issue and this would be a suggestion only.

5.3.1.2 Parking Position and Duration

Other external status factors included the parking position and duration of staff cars on the premises which was highlighted by the teaching SMR and teaching SNR. Some of the teaching SMR expressed how those who arrived first at the car park were closer to the Academy building and this was agreed by a few of the teaching SNR. Both parking position and time of arrival/departure at the Academy can therefore be used to identify the working hours of staff and consequently who might be working the longest. This could subsequently

be utilised as a method to identify which staff to reward for their hard work, such as with promotion. This is agreed by Bennett *et al.* (2003) who contend that opportunities may be presented to those staff willing to work long hours and are totally dedicated to the organisations. This is furthered by Fincham and Rhodes (2005) who posit that an employee's progress and value is depicted by their attachment to the organisation and therefore the hours they work. However Sang *et al.* (2015) warns of issues associated with working long hours, which are noted as being linked negatively with an employee's physical and mental health.

Further issues, around parking and working hours, are that little consideration may be given to family responsibilities for workers, such as having to complete the 'school-run' and therefore not being able to arrive to work early or stay late (Wheatley, 2012). Furthermore, these staff may be identified as not working as long hours and so could be less eligible for promotion. One suggestion offered by Wheatley (2012) is for flexible working hours to be considered which allows employees to work from home. This would also make it more difficult to identify which staff work the longest hours and reduce the prominence of one's working hours being linked to their value and worth to the organisation, as all stakeholders would be able to take advantage of this scheme. It may also help reduce the associated negative health issues with working long hours and also support staff with child care responsibilities such as the 'school-run'. Flexible working hours is therefore recommended for consideration at the Academy. For instance teachers that do not have classes first period in the morning could arrive late. The benefits of flexible work hours are also highlighted by Robbins (2005) who notes that it can help reduce staff absenteeism and increase productivity. Although the author also warns that it is not applicable to jobs where interaction is needed with customers at a pre-determined time. Since students are on-site at a set time each day, it

is recommended that a trial is completed to see whether flexible working hours would be appropriate and successful in the Academy setting.

5.3.2 Theme Five - internal status

This theme includes those stakeholders that have offices near the front of the Academy building and ‘staff titles and promotions’ which refers to the titles and promotions that are awarded at the Academy.

5.3.2.1 Front Offices

The prominence and importance of the front offices was explored by many of the teaching SMR and were deemed as a focal point for contact with one of the four most senior members of the SLT (Principal, Vice Principal and Senior Assistant Vice Principals). This was also agreed by many of the teaching SLT and it was considered that the closer you were located to the front offices, the more power and the higher internal status you have at the Academy. It was also perceived by one member of the SLT that these offices are employed as a surveillance tool, where it was possible for the Principal to identify those staff members that are identified as leaving the Academy early. The role of office design and employee surveillance is discussed by Danielsson (2013) who suggests that offices can be strategically located so as to control staff and convey hierarchy. However Danielsson (2013) also contends that one way productivity can be improved is by having activity nodes which encourage flexible and spontaneous informal meetings between co-workers and supervisors. This is discussed by Ekstrand and Hansen (2016) who posit that informal meetings, in companies that have greater flexibility with staff office locations, can strengthen the organisational identity and ease collaboration between departments. Thus, it is a recommendation that the four most senior member of the SLT, with offices at the front of the building, are repositioned

so that their offices are located around the Academy and where possible near the SMR they supervise. This may help improve productivity by encouraging informal contact and also improve other staffs' perception of their value to the Academy by eradicating the association of the most important staff having offices at the front of the building.

5.3.2.2 Staff Titles and Promotions

Another internal status sign at the Academy are the staff titles and promotions which were considered by many of the SMR and the SLT to be secretive and lacking transparency. Indeed some SMR were not able to distinguish all staff at the Academy and this created issues since some were unclear who to report to regarding various tasks and issues. A possible reason for this was provided by one SMR who felt the high staff turnover made it difficult to familiarise one's self with personnel and positions. One member of the SLT had a slightly different perception and attributed the transparency issues to continual changes in job roles and positions, which are considered quite transient at the Academy. This is agreed by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who suggest strategies to reduce teacher turnover include 'golden handcuffing' staff with cash incentives, internal promotions and other opportunities. This might suggest that the continual changes in job roles and positions, which were identified by the SLT, are an attempt to reduce staff turnover at the Academy. However, Brown (1998) earlier suggests that promotions can also be utilised to create a more homogeneous organisation which conforms to the cultural expectations. This is agreed by Fincham and Rhodes (2005) who consider that promotions can be used as a 'gatekeeping' function to ensure control over staff by promoting groups which conform to senior management's expectations. It may therefore be that internal promotions are employed in a clandestine manner by the SLT in order to create a more conformist and homogeneous staff

culture. A strategy which also links back to the previously identified increase in conformity at the Academy.

One SMR also suggested the Academy does not have a culture of celebrating promotions and success, with some stakeholders being unsure as to what information can or cannot be passed on to others. This was perceived to be to such an extent that some of the SLT were not privy to the fact another member of the team was appointed, until they turned up one day. This might suggest that the clandestine promotions are used by the Principal or Vice Principal to control the culture of the Academy. Yet ironically, given the secretive titles and positions, many of the SLT also reported that titles are important at the Academy and are directly proportional to staff value, with regard to their position within the Academy. The lack of transparency in relation to titles may therefore be actively damaging the value that staff feel at the Academy, as well as making it unclear for who to liaise with for tasks and issues. This is agreed by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who espouse that ambiguous models of staff structures can be problematic, such as role overload or a mismatch of role expectations. It is therefore a recommendation that promotions are celebrated at the Academy and announced to all staff, for instance in morning briefings, staff meetings or the notice board.

5.3.3 Theme Six - corporatisation

This theme explores the ‘corporatisation’ of the Academy and is divided into three areas: Academy ‘branding and link with sponsor’, ‘corporate environment’ and ‘corporation communication’.

5.3.3.1 Branding and Link with Sponsor

The branding of the Academy and link with the main sponsor was discussed by all staff. Whilst the logo was praised for being contemporary and current it was also criticised for lacking meaning to the Academy and neglecting the old school's identity. One of the SMR felt the rebranding was an attempt to strengthen affiliations with the main sponsor which is associated with educational excellence and prestige. This is agreed by Gibson and Bisschoff (2014) who discuss such strategies as academies highlighting the sponsor on their website or adopting their uniform. However some criticism was expressed at this, since the main sponsor's grammar schools are from a very different context to that of the Academy. This is earlier agreed by Teo (2012) who outlines that branding 'facades' can be created which can contrast with what a school is really like. This is supported by the fact that the rebranding was identified as confusing parents who assumed the Academy was a grammar school like other schools of the main sponsor. One explanation for the reinforcement of this link was perceived by one member of the SLT as an attempt to change the demographic and the cohorts of students and teachers at the Academy. This is furthered by Leo *et al.* (2010) who consider grammar schools sponsoring secondary modern schools as quite ironic, given that grammar schools 'cream off' the most able students who otherwise might have gone to the secondary modern. However they also note that this sponsoring might help reduce the social isolation of the two sectors and encourage more able students to attend a grammar sponsored academy. Further support for the role of organisational branding is that it is considered to be a factor which can help boost student recruitment (Bock *et al.*, 2014). It is therefore a recommendation that the promotion of the Academy sponsor should continue and where possible be emphasised. Support for this strategy is agreed by Myers *et al.* (2012) who state that brand reputation can be a key strength of an organisation and where possible its advantages should be utilised.

5.3.3.2 Corporate Environment

Many of the SMR and the SLT discussed the corporate environment of the Academy building and expressed issues with its design, which was considered to lack character and be more sterile, when compared to the old building. This led one SMR to conclude that the environment promoted feelings of being caged. The idea of being trapped is discussed by Piro (2008) who argues that it has a special resonance in the works of Michel Foucault and can be applied to the architecture of schools. For instance, Wild (2011) who draws on Foucault's (1977) discussion of Bentham's Panopticon (a design for a prison with cells constructed around a central observation point), suggests that a school can be perceived as a panopticon where students and teachers are kept under observation and are consequently controlled by the fear of being seen. This is agreed by Wolosky (2014) who suggests that in Foucault's theory (1995) schools are enclosed disciplinary places, which break down 'dangerous' communication and promote absolute control. The impetus on using the Academy building to control staff behaviours was discussed by one SLT, who believed the aim of the design was linked with the desire to make the organisation more corporate and productive. This was agreed by the one non-teaching member of the SLT who concluded that she was less fazed by the build changes due to her previous business background. One explanation for the more corporate design of the Academy building is provided by Leo *et al.* (2010) who suggest that as the BSF programme was scaled down, and the Local Authority was made the construction client, the need to reduce costs and maximise expenditure increased. It may therefore have been more important for the Academy design to be more economically functional rather than overly elaborate and expensive, which was a criticism associated with some early academy buildings. This is agreed Besten *et al.* (2011) who provides the example of 'flagship' spaces in new academy buildings which were meant to be

showpieces but were often lamented with regards to their appropriateness and value for money.

Further issues with the build were also expressed by one member of the SLT who elaborated on the potential health problems due to lack of light and poor air circulation. This is agreed by Begemann *et al.* (1997) who espouse that these health problems can range from minor sleep and performance difficulties to major depression. This is furthered by van Bommel and van de Beld (2004) who continue that natural light can have a powerful influence on workplace atmosphere and can have a stimulating effect on workers. It is therefore important that staff at the Academy receive regular access to natural light during the Academy day. One option would be to assign staff an outside duty each day, for instance a break or lunch time duty in the playground, or a bus duty. This may also help develop student and teacher relationships as teachers learn about students from their social groups. This is agreed by Coleman and Earley (2005) who highlight teacher and student relationships as a measure of a school's effectiveness. Alternatively, given that Harris and Muijs (2005) warn that teacher time is at a premium, staff could be given a space to eat their lunch outside, weather permitting.

5.3.3.3 Corporate Communication

In relation to communication, many of the SLT and some of the staff perceived that communication at the Academy reflects a more corporate and educational image. This included more guarded language which was much more formal and businesslike. Support for this is provided by Hatcher (2008) who argues that academy's are often run by sponsors with business interests and are effectively seen as business organisations. This may also explain why pressures on communication were also felt by one member of the SLT who noted that

their role creates even more emphasis on corporate language due to their position of power and the negative impact this can have on subordinates. Support for this view is provided by some of the staff who perceived communication as rather negative from the SLT. This is agreed by Brown (1998) who posits that culture can be constrained by communication failures. Equally, a few staff identified some informal language at the Academy, particularly in relation to conversations in the staffroom and conversations between staff and students. The importance of informal communication is considered high, given that a great deal of communication that takes place in an organisation might be informal; it also allows subordinates to feel more comfortable in expressing their opinions, which can lead to a greater chance of innovation (Burnes, 2004). It is therefore a recommendation that the Academy attempts to reduce its corporate language and increase its informal communication. This might be achieved by the SLT making an effort to get to know those that they line manage.

Additional issues were also noted by both the SLT and the SNR, in the utilisation of emails which was deemed to be excessive and persistent. The negatives, of the ever increasing volume of emails that employees can receive, have been highlighted by Szóstek (2011). He iterates that all the actions that users need to perform, when dealing with emails, can lead to the feeling of email overload and can have a deleterious influence on productivity and workflow. It is therefore a recommendation that Academy policy should be to encourage more face to face conversations. This is agreed by Myers *et al.* (2012) who argue that, although face to face conversation is more costly in terms of time and effort, it is often more fruitful as it involves two way interaction and fosters long term employee engagement. Alternatively an embargo could take place on emails from 6pm to 8am. This is furthered by Ramsay and

Renaud (2012) who discuss implementing an email acceptable use policy, for stipulating acceptable and unacceptable email behaviours.

5.4 Cultural Web Element Three - power structures

This element explores the ‘power structures’ of the Academy and relates to the core assumptions and beliefs, about what is important at the Academy, which are held by the Senior Leadership Team. Following discussion, themes on ‘power constraints’ and ‘academic success’ were established.

5.4.1 Theme Seven - power constraints

The sub-themes examined for ‘power constraints’ are: ‘large and heterogeneous SLT’ and ‘autocratic leadership’.

5.4.1.1 Large and Heterogeneous SLT

Most of the teaching SMR and the senior leaders discussed the SLT as being too large and divisive and consequently power constraints were perceived to exist. One possible reason for the power constraints and conflict was the lack of a shared vision which was discussed by one SMR and has been previously explored in this chapter. This is agreed by Wallace and Hall (1994) who suggest that strong leadership teams are based upon a culture of teamwork and consensus in decision making. Issues were believed to centre on the fact that one or two people were perceived as being responsible for the Academy’s strategic direction and core beliefs. One suggestion was that the SLT would benefit if it was smaller and this would help form a core belief. Although Bush and Middlewood (2013) argue that there is a desirable trend of larger senior leadership teams which can more effectively handle a broader range of responsibilities. Furthermore one member of the SLT concluded that reducing the size of the

distributed leadership would be pointless, since the decisions are made by three or four people on the SLT and so, unless you are part of that group, the divisions and issues would still remain. Rutherford (2004) advocates that if school leadership is to be effective it must include major contributions from the whole leadership group. It is therefore a recommendation that decision making on the SLT is based upon democratic consensus with a majority vote needed in order for decisions to be made. This is agreed by Harris and Muijs (2005) who espouse that democratic leadership can be an effective part of school improvement since a large group of people are invested in the process.

5.4.1.2 Autocratic Leadership

Many of the SLT also identified the leadership style as being autocratic and decision making was deemed to rest with the Vice Principal. One possible option to address this autocratic leadership would be to employ another Vice Principal, since only one currently exists at the Academy. However this was argued to create further issues with tension and additional power constraints. This autocratic leadership was also perceived as eroding the power of other members of the SLT. Brown (1998) argues that this type of leadership can be effective but problems can occur when there is a need for organisational change or improvement, since these types of leaders are often unwilling to listen to the advice of others. Chance and Chance (2002) also identify issues with this type of leadership and suggest that it is most effective when the subordinates are not competent or confident in the task at hand. It therefore does not appear to help in developing the skill-set and expertise of senior staff. Also this type of leadership is unlikely to elicit the co-operation or commitment of those expecting to complete the task, since they lack autonomy (Senior, 2002).

In addition to the previous recommendation of democratic consensus to support the SLT's decision making, it is also recommended that tasks are subsequently assigned to an SLT member and a working party of Academy stakeholders are formed for task delivery. This type of leadership is discussed by Blake and McCanse (1991) as team management which is identified by having a high concern for both the success of the production and for the utilisation of people. Team management would therefore enable a greater range of Academy staff to be involved in decision making and task expertise development. This is agreed by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who suggest selecting staff based on expertise rather than formal position. Mullins (2005) also earlier contends that a greater focus on teams is an effective strategy for school improvement; although the author warns that to be effective the team must work in unity. Thus it would be important for the chosen member of the SLT to effectively manage the selection and dynamics of the team, in order for the task delivery to be successful. Whilst Inman (2011) notes that a shift towards more distributed leadership can also be beneficial for developing potential leaders as they are provided opportunities to gain experiences of leadership early in their career.

5.4.2 Theme Eight - academic success

This theme examines the progress and academic results of students at the Academy.

5.4.2.1 Student Progress and Results

Concerns identified by an overwhelming majority of the SMR were centred on the progress and results of students, which were a constant worry for one particular member of the SLT. Many of the SLT also sustained the importance of student progress and results and that the systems in place at the Academy are designed to facilitate this. The priority of this focus is agreed by Harris and Muijs (2005) who posit that the focus on student outcomes and

academic performance is a key factor in school improvement. This is furthered by Sammons *et al.* (2005) who in particular consider ‘value-added’ of pupil progress as a crucial indicator of school performance and therefore a necessary consideration for schools. However one member of the SLT noted that the focus on progress and results might not always be in the best interest of the students. One example offered by this member was the Academy policy of early entry of exams which allowed schools to enter students in the first year of their GCSE studies, in an attempt to ‘bank’ grades by offering additional re-sit opportunities, which in turn helps the school’s league table position (Issacs, 2014). However Rodeiro and Nádas (2012), when examining the modular routes of English, found students certificating early in the course were at a disadvantage compared to those certificating at the end, although they did identify an improvement when the same method was applied to GCSE Maths. Whilst Issacs (2014) also warns that the policy of multiple entries can overburden students with assessments, when this may not necessarily be in their best interest. In summary, one senior leader concluded that whilst the key Academy strategy was to increase the percentages of key performance indicators, this was also probably the same aim of other schools and academies. Given the pressure on schools in league tables, the focus on student academic success is considered necessary at the Academy and should continue. However a policy of internal discussion should take place on the cost to benefit ratio of the promotion of academic initiatives, evaluating their impact and value to students. For instance, given the findings from Roderio and Nádas (2012) it may have been advisable to enter students early for their GCSE maths but not their English.

5.5 Cultural Web Element Four - organisational structures

This element explores the ‘organisational structures’ of the Academy. Participants were questioned as to what does the formal staffing structure, or the informal ways in which staff

work at the Academy, reflect about the following: power structures, what is important, and important relationships? This revealed the following themes: ‘formal constraints’ and ‘informal constraints’.

5.5.1 Theme Nine - formal constraints

This theme is divided into two sub-themes which will be explored: ‘totalitarian Vice Principal’ and ‘hierarchical and top heavy’.

5.5.1.1 Totalitarian Vice Principal

The only Vice Principal was perceived as having totalitarian control by all of the staff at the Academy. This included a few of the SNR and an overwhelming majority of the SMR and the SLT. This was argued to be at such a point where some were unsure if the Principal really knows what is happening at the Academy, whilst another SMR commented that they had experienced instances of the Vice Principal abusing their absolute power. Issues with totalitarian leadership are agreed by Courtney and Gunter (2015) who suggest that it leads to a school consisting mostly of those who believe, or who stay quiet, or those that are rendered disposable. This is agreed by Wilkins (2015) who argues that this type of leadership is merely an exercise in ensuring compliance, which is characterised by surveillance and erosion of staff powers. Some members of the SLT also identified issues with this type of control, where so much of the Academy decision making falls upon one person. For instance, this method might mean that if the Vice Principal left the organisation, it may struggle to cope with the void and so this type of leadership was therefore considered ineffective. This is agreed by Mullins (2005) who espouses that it can make a leader’s span of control too wide which can make it difficult to supervise subordinates, leads to poor performance and slowness to adapt to change, such as when the leader leaves the organisation. Yet, De Cremer (2006) advocates

that this type of leadership can be successful, providing the leader is willing to self-sacrifice, such as having a higher workload and longer work hours than others. However Stewart (2014), who discusses Casserley and Megginson (2008) work on manager burnout, warns that this can lead to exhaustion and the following quotation is presented as an apt summary of the Vice Principal's leadership style:

“There was a sense of pride in working impossible hours... Many of those researched were self-confessed perfectionists and had a strong need to prove something to themselves and others at work... They felt their professional reputation was vulnerable and they were constantly worried about losing it” (Steward, 2014, p.55).

One solution might be for the Vice Principal to adapt their leadership style and receive senior management training which focuses on encouraging more distributed leadership (Mullins, 2005), however the following warning is offered:

“...in the effort to ‘change their spots’, autocratic managers may lose their capacity to lead. This is because their ability to provide a degree of certainty and security in confusing and contested situations is what, despite their bullying tendencies, can make them seductive, if not particularly attractive figures of authority” (Knights and Wilmott, 2010, p.118).

Another solution to this type of leadership may be to employ an additional Vice Principal and this is supported by Moos and Dempster (1998) who suggest that shared leadership can generate greater managerial capacity. It is therefore a recommendation that another Vice

Principal is appointed at the Academy and a clear list of role and responsibilities are transferred from the current Vice Principal to the new appointment.

5.5.1.2 Hierarchical and Top Heavy

Despite the Vice Principal being identified as having totalitarian control of the Academy, an overwhelming majority of the SLT considered the organisation to be quite hierarchical with organisational control resting with the Principal. The Vice Principal was also viewed as being responsible for the day to day running of the Academy and this might also explain why many SMR and the SLT perceived the Vice Principals as having totalitarian control. This is agreed by Wallace and Hall (1994) who advocates that Headteachers use various overt and covert strategies to realise their interests and retain control over staff. It is therefore likely that the Vice Principal is enacting the decisions and goals of the Principal. This is acknowledged by Garrett (1999) who suggests the Deputy Headteacher can be viewed as the operational manager and is heavily dependent on the views of the Headteacher. In summary of the role the following quotation is offered: “the deputy may be seen as a communicator, advocate and an exemplar for the head’s values and vision and so ensuring that these are translated into practice” (Rutherford, 2003, p.65).

Most of the SNR also agreed power was shared across the senior team and that the Academy is quite hierarchical in structure. This was perceived to cause problems with the staffing structure being too top heavy and this consequently resulted in the SNR perceiving they have little say in Academy strategy. Hatch (1997) suggests hierarchies are considered by some as a fundamental aspect of organisations, with each member reporting to one person. They are also considered effective at promoting accountability and making it clear who is responsible for set tasks (Bush, 2011). However Mullins (2005) earlier highlights issues with hierarchies

which offer disproportionate rewards for those at the top whilst often depriving individuals at the bottom of the chance to develop. Further issues of top heavy and hierarchical structures are argued by Knight and Wilmott (2010) who espouse that commitment often declines the lower down the stakeholder is in the organisation. One solution offered is for lateral connections in an organisations which offers stakeholders more than one person to liaise with (Hatch, 1997). In examining schools, Fidler (1997) suggests that hybrid structures are often advantageous where clear divisions are not always apparent and participation can be needed from many levels. Furthermore, Cunliffe (2008) advocates that the key is to balance vertical and horizontal integrations so work can be carried out effectively. In summary, Bush (2011) considers schools to be increasingly examining different organisational structures which may promote greater collegiality, however he acknowledges that some element of hierarchy will always remain. One previously offered solution to counter this type of leadership is the formation of staff working groups which are selected based upon their expertise and led by a member of the SLT. However Bush and Middlewood (2013) posit that working parties can also be formed at a department level and can be based upon ad-hoc priorities identified in the subject, for instance in department meetings. This is therefore identified as a recommendation for the Academy. However for smaller departments it is acknowledged that working groups may need to be cross-curricular and run across two or more subjects. Whilst another simple method of collegiality would be for leaders to actively seek the views of subordinates (Chance and Chance, 2002). It is therefore a recommendation that the SLT and SMR meet annually with those they supervise, in order to obtain their views on current Academy or department strategy.

5.5.2 Theme Ten - informal constraints

This theme explores the prohibition of informal work which was identified at the Academy.

5.5.2.1 Informal Work Prohibited

Informal work and initiatives were viewed by some of the SMR and the SLT as being prohibited at the Academy. This is a factor which may inhibit Academy progress, as informal work can provide additional channels of communication for ideas to be discussed and it can also satisfy members' social needs (Mullins, 2005). Explanation for the perceived prohibition on informal work was also offered by one SMR who identified issues in asking the Vice Principal for permission, combined with the pressure of raising students' grades. One possible reason for the reduction in informal work was offered by one senior leader who suggested that bureaucracy slowed any potential informal opportunities. Bureaucracy is acknowledged by Hatch (1997) as a method for increasing reliability in decision making by utilising centralised controls, however she also suggests that it can lead to over-rationalising decisions and inhibiting flexibility and change. This is agreed by Senior (2002) who espouses that bureaucratic organisations are intended to be neutral and fair but are often associated with negative connotations, such as burdensome regulations, too much 'paperwork' and overweening rules. Coleman and Earley (2005) also further this discussion and argue that schools are typically bureaucratic, especially when the collegial model of more informal work has not been embraced as the aspiration. Therefore the previous sections recommendations of working groups, which increase collegiality, should also help contribute to reducing bureaucracy at the Academy.

Further problems were discussed by another member of the SLT who felt that internal politics were having a detrimental effect on some departments and this was impacting on staffs' willingness to work informally. This is agreed by Senior (2002) who argues that politics are an indisputable aspect of organisational life which can negatively impact performance. One

explanation for these politics was the change in staff type and the resentment this might cause to older staff members, since new staff were deemed as having higher qualifications or thrust into teaching positions without the necessary experience (such as in Teach First). This is concurred by Coleman and Earley (2005) who state that micro-political factors, such as power struggles between different subject departments and staff, can have a harmful effect on an organisation. Consequently, the previously identified recommendation, of regular time being made available to encourage staff socialisation, should help address some of the breakdown in staff relationships and promote informal work. This is agreed by Myers *et al.* (2012) who consider that effective informal organisations are based upon the communication and relationships of co-workers. However Harris and Muijs (2005) acknowledged that the lack of teacher time and lack of reward are additional barriers for informal work. It is therefore a suggestion that staff training time, and one hour a week on teacher timetables, is reserved for the pursuit of informal work. Upon completion of informal work, a staff reward could then be given to those initiatives that are nominated by their manager as having had a positive effect upon the Academy.

5.6 Cultural Web Element Five - control systems

This element examines the ‘control systems’ of the Academy. Participants were questioned, what do the formalised control systems, such as measurements and reward, monitor and therefore emphasise about what is important at the Academy? Following discussion, ‘performance management’ and ‘student and staff reward’ were established as themes.

5.6.1 Theme Eleven - performance management

This theme explores ‘performance management’ at the Academy which relates to ‘staff assessment methods’.

5.6.1.1 Staff Assessment Methods

Many of the SMR and senior leaders discussed that staff are measured by results and Heads of Department are measured by the results of their department. This was perceived to be a major priority for some of the staff and at the expense of all else at the Academy. Staff who do not get positive results could also be labelled negatively at the Academy and one member of the SLT suggested that the focus on results can create animosity between staff. Whilst the pressure to improve failing exam results was a factor as to why staff might leave the Academy. This is agreed by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who contend this system contributes to the management of those staff that are underperforming, such as with disciplinary procedures or rewarding with pay increments. However one senior leader concluded there are issues with the data because it does not take into account individual student context. This is agreed by Loudon and Wildy (1999, cited Caldwell *et al.* 2003) who suggests a key issue with these systems is that they separate performance from the context and so try and breakdown all the subjective aspects of a teachers role into a set of criteria. Moreover, Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) suggest any measure of teacher effectiveness needs to incorporate 'context specificity'. Indeed Campbell *et al.* (2003) discuss a model of appraisal which incorporates factors such as pupil background, pupil personal characteristics and cultural and organisational contexts of teaching. It is therefore a recommendation that a formalised list of contextual issues, which are acknowledged when reviewing a teacher's performance, are shared with staff.

Other staff assessment was discussed by a few of the SNR and some of the SLT, who also noted the process of lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny which take place. One member of the SLT deemed this type of assessment to be inconsequential, voicing that

the main priority is results. However Kearns *et al.* (2015) contend that “teacher effectiveness is much more than simply measuring teachers by how their students do on a test” (Kearns *et al.*, 2015, p.32). A multi-level model is therefore required that utilises a variety of equally weighted methods. It is therefore recommended that a range of different methods are used to officially assess teachers at the Academy, not just their class results. Although this is not to suggest that teachers should be overly assessed utilising an abundance of different methods, which can be too top-down and alienate teachers further (Feigenbaum and Iqani, 2015). It is therefore recommended that a triangulation of three or four different methods are used for teacher assessment e.g. class progress results, lesson observation, work scrutiny and teacher interview.

On the other hand, non-teaching staff were identified as having no objective assessment measure. Explanation for this is provided by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who posit that for support staff there is generally a lack of career progression and performance management reviews, indicating this is not a priority for schools. However Glover and Levačić (2005) discuss staffing as being the highest factor in school expenditure and so if non-teaching staff were to be part of the performance management process they might also logically query a pay increment, assuming they are not at the top of their pay scale. Furthermore, Sibieta (2015) discusses continuing pressures on school budgets, thus the addition of performance management for non-teaching staff, and the potential pay rises, could be a serious financial issue for the Academy. This might explain why the performance management process for non-teaching staff does not currently exist at the Academy. However Mullins (2005) advocates that performance appraisal is a crucial activity for improving the performance of staff. This is agreed by Robbins (2005) who suggests it can be a key tool for motivating staff, especially when they receive a favourable performance review. Conversely it can also be

used as a tool to ensure staff who are not performing are more accountable (Oldroyd, 2005). Therefore the lack of performance management for non-teaching staff could be negatively impacting their performance and the success of the Academy. It is therefore a recommendation that performance management for non-teaching staff is introduced at the Academy. However, in recognition of the pressure on staff budgets, it is advised that this is phased in over a number of years, possibly beginning with those staff who are the longest serving.

5.6.2 Theme Twelve - student and staff reward

This theme reviews the reward system at the Academy for both students and staff.

5.6.2.1 Various Student Reward

A plethora of student reward was discussed by all staff at the Academy. The importance of reward systems to an organisation is noted by Brown (1998) who advocates that they are effective at influencing an organisation's culture and for controlling the behaviours of its members. This is agreed by Burke (2002) who acknowledges that reward systems can also be used as a transformational tool in order to facilitate change in the organisation's culture. Thus the Academy having a number of different reward schemes for students would be considered a clear benefit. In particular an overwhelming majority of the SMR and the SLT discussed the Vivo system (electronic student rewards) and other reward methods observed were student vouchers, praise postcards, prom and discos. However some SMR noted issues with these systems which were not being reviewed for their success. Whilst one SMR felt, although it was important to have reward systems, their effectiveness was not important to the SLT. A member of the SLT also considered this to particularly be an issue, since these systems require significant financial investment. The importance of reviewing the impact of rewards

is discussed by Mullins (2005) who postulates that rewards must be seen as equitable and fair, otherwise their positive value will be diminished. It is therefore a recommendation that the reward systems are reviewed, perhaps by gaining feedback from both students and teachers. Other rewards discussed included award evenings and assemblies. Yet issues were identified relating back to the previous totalitarian control theme of the Vice Principal. Since the Vice Principal decides which students receive awards from subject areas. However, Robbins (2015) discusses the power of a reward, which comes from the ones distributing it and the perception of those receiving it. Thus if the students know that the teachers are not deciding the rewards for their subject areas, then the reward power from those teachers is greatly reduced. It is therefore an additional recommendation that subject rewards are decided by department teachers and not the Vice Principal.

5.6.2.2 Fiscal Staff Reward

All staff discussed and agreed no staff reward exists with the exception of pay. Issues with this are highlighted by Harris and Muijs (2005) who note that teachers should be given both formal reward such as pay and promotion, and informal reward such as disseminating good practice or praise. As previously discussed it is a recommendation that some of the staff reward schemes which were lost in the change of leadership are reinitiated. However two SMR also concluded that pay was used as a retention method and also utilised to help enforce conformity. However Mullins (2005) highlights more effective methods of staff retention which includes building a learning culture through a realistic career management programme. It would therefore be a recommendation that a career development programme is initiated at the Academy which includes pathways for those wishing to improve their teaching practice, those wishing to aspire to be middle leaders and those wishing to aspire to join the SLT. However the Academy has recently began this programme which was initiated after the data

collection of this research, therefore this is not recommended as a target for improvement. Although its success has yet to be measured and it is therefore a recommendation that staff retention is reviewed following twelve months completion of this programme and any staff that do leave are debriefed to ascertain why, as well as to their views on the career development programme.

Another SMR concluded that given the numbers of hours they work their pay was not overly generous, whilst a member of the SLT suggested that paying staff well can lead to feelings of being trapped and stale. Burnes (2004) discusses the benefits of performance-related pay, in both the public and private sector, where rather than rewarding based upon a person's position or seniority, reward is based on performance. This is agreed by Robbins (2005) who argues performance-related pay can be a key tool for improving employee motivation. The introduction of this at the Academy may mean staff do not feel trapped or stale and also have targets to aim for. It would therefore be a recommendation, that for future teaching appointments at the Academy, staff pay is not quite so high and a bonus scheme is offered which is based upon performance management targets e.g. a positive residual on the data for a class or department.

However for the non-teaching SMR, no staff reward was identified, even fiscal. Also, as previously noted, since performance management is not currently used with non-teaching staff, they have no measurement for success. Harris and Muijs (2005) discuss that in order for school improvement to be successful there should be appropriate recognition and rewards. It is therefore another recommendation that the reinitiated staff reward schemes, which were lost in the change of leadership, also apply to non-teaching staff. Secondly, along with the introduction of performance management for non-teaching staff, bonuses are also introduced

for future non-teaching appointments. This is supported by Bush and Middlewood (2013) who suggests that support staffs' pay is often low and many feel undervalued, thus the opportunity for rewarding this staff group with bonuses might contribute towards making them feel more valued.

5.7 Cultural Web Element Six - rituals and routines

This section examines the 'rituals and routines' of the Academy. Participants were questioned as to what are the routine ways that staff behave towards each other and what do the rituals of Academy life, such as training programmes, promotion and assessment, point to what is important in the Academy? From examination, the following themes were identified: 'staff promotion and assessment', 'staff socialisation' and 'staff training'.

5.7.1 Theme Thirteen - staff promotions

This theme explores the staff 'promotion criteria and selection' at the Academy.

5.7.1.1 Promotion Criteria and Selection

Promotions were considered to be preferentially based by all stakeholders, with an overwhelming majority of the SMR contending that promotions are based upon networks and often pre-decided by the Principal and Vice Principal. Promotions were also perceived as preferential by the SNR and some outlined that staff could be promoted without an interview and this can create resentment amongst other colleagues. Preferential based promotions are discussed by Oldroyd (2005) who contends it is still very common to groom teachers for promotion which depends heavily on the patronage of the Headteacher, although officially all promotions should be based on open competition. Additionally, Bush and Middlewood (2013) suggest that Headteachers may sometimes be approached by staff seeking positions,

which when awarded can create resentment amongst other staff, for instance in relation to salary inequities. It therefore important that staff at the Academy do not perceive appointments as being made before interviews and open competition is promoted by the Principal, for instance by announcing any promotion opportunities to all staff in briefing.

Aside from promotions being decided based upon ones relationship to the Principal and Vice Principal, they were also deemed by some of the focus groups as a method of staff retention and this was perceived as resulting in some staff being promoted too early. Promotions as a means of retention are explored by Brown (1998) who posits that they can be used as a means of rewarding those staff who are loyal and consistent and it therefore creates a more homogenous culture. However the use of strategic promotions, as a tool for political support, is acknowledged to be a factor in highly internal organisations, and is therefore less likely to instil cultural change and improvement (Senior, 2002). Although some stakeholders also noted that deserving staff could be promoted and this was usually based upon those willing to work hard, long hours and to the detriment of their social life and family. This is agreed by Mullins (2005) who advocates that promotions are often utilised as a means of promoting those staff who are competent and work hard in their position. This is developed by Chingos and West (2011) who suggest promotion can be a method of rewarding and retaining effective teachers. In summary, it is considered advisable to strike a balance between promoting internal staff, who are perceived as effective and can continue the trend of Academy improvement, whilst also promoting external staff who will bring new ideas and help instil cultural change and improvement. Bush and Middlewood (2013) espouse that internal promotions can sometimes be a short term way of retaining staff and therefore this should be matched with effective and robust strategies when making new external appointments. In addition Inman (2014) avers that exposure to a greater range of people and

management practices can be an asset, particularly in relation to the appointment of educational leaders. Since these staff may bring a range of experiences to an organisation and may therefore be more successful when navigating future challenges.

5.7.2 Theme Fourteen - staff socialisation

This theme explores the mixed socialisation of staff at the Academy.

5.7.2.1 Mixed Social Interaction

Academy staff were considered to be generally friendly by all stakeholders. This included an overwhelming majority of the SMR, the SLT and many of the SNR. However variations in colleagues' politeness level were noticed by the SMR. For instance one focus group deemed staff from the old school to be politer than new Academy staff and some differences between the politeness of the SLT and teachers was observed. An explanation for this was provided by one member of the SLT who noted that high workloads can make it difficult to socialise with other staff. Wallace and Hall (1994) suggest that the SLT can have weak connections to other groups in a school due to difficulty in forming relationships. Harris and Muijs (2005) also discuss that for a school to be effective, good communication is required between staff and senior management. In order to promote this, it is recommended that the SLT attend the termly staff social events and team building activities on staff training days; a strategy previously recommended. This is agreed by Robbins (2005) who discusses the benefits of creating a communal culture where friendship and performance are utilised in order to achieve the organisational goal. Thus, the more improved the friendliness is between the SLT and their staff, the stronger the communal culture and the more effective the pursuit of Academy goals.

High staff turnover was also perceived to be another factor that inhibits socialisation and one which leads to organisational decline (Hatch, 1997). One member of the SLT felt reducing socialisation was a directive from the Principal and Vice Principal, in order to create a more corporate atmosphere. This is agreed by Bush (2011) who discusses the notion of the Headteacher of the school being responsible for developing a school's culture. It is therefore plausible that the corporate culture is a directive from the Principal and Vice Principal of the Academy. One final strategy argued to reduce socialisation at the Academy was the rolling breaks and rolling lunches which were considered a barrier to the staff body creating too much camaraderie. In summary, Brown (1998) argues that socialisation is important in order to act as effective members of the organisation where, through social interaction, compatible views are learnt and non-compatible views are relinquished. Moreover, Mullins (2005) contends that successful organisations are those that involve various levels of social interaction, such as demonstrating care for colleagues and listening to issues. Bush and Middlewood (2013) also discuss socialisation as being important for new employees to perform effectively, since they need time to assimilate into the organisation and socialisation is a key aspect of this. In conclusion, whilst the previous recommendations of staff social events and team building activities should support socialisation it would also be another recommendation that the rolling lunches are reduced to one, so more staff can have lunch together in the staff room or canteen. Should this not be possible, such as due to timetabling issues, a second recommendation would be for refreshments such as tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes to be made available one day after school in the canteen for staff to socialise together, perhaps under the guise of promoting teaching and learning strategies.

5.7.3 Theme Fifteen - staff training

This theme discusses the ‘continuing professional development’ which staff receive at the Academy.

5.7.3.1 Continuing Professional Development

An overwhelming majority of the SMR agreed there were minimal continuing professional development opportunities and this was observed to be a change since becoming an Academy. One reason identified, was because teachers were no longer allowed to be absent for exam group lessons in order to attend external training. However a solution offered was for staff to select and complete training in their own time, outside of the Academy. Reflecting that funding and time were muted as issues in completing this type of training. However Inman (2009) highlights issues with middle managers selecting their own training and development. She suggests that it can be inappropriate, since it may have been selected without specific advice and guidance. Alternatively some SMR found a solution by completing training online in their own time after school. This is agreed by Smith and Sivo (2012) who discuss e-learning based training as a method to overcome the fiscal barrier of teacher training and professional development.

An overwhelming majority of the senior leaders also agreed they are offered minimal external training. Whilst one member of the SLT did not know who was permitted on external training and why, and another commented it was decided by the three or four members of the SLT that are involved in strategic decision making for the Academy. In summary, a senior member contended that this results in the feelings of frustration, particularly since for them it was a target from their performance management observation. The importance of a senior leader’s involvement in training is debated by Bush and Glover

(2014) who suggests that a common factor of successful schools is a leadership team which share a focus on a high quality teaching and learning programme. Consequently, if senior leaders are not receiving external training, and are therefore not up to date with current strands and initiatives, this could reduce the overall effectiveness of the Academy's leadership team. Furthermore, a lack of external training was also considered to erode a teachers' efficacy and skill-set in the classroom. This is agreed by O'Sullivan *et al.* (1997) who suggest that well planned staff development can lead to increased staff effectiveness and improvement. It is therefore a recommendation that a greater number of staff are involved with external training, for instance one strategy might be for members of the leadership team to attend external training. They can then disseminate the knowledge acquired to other stakeholders, during staff training. Whilst Bubb and Earley (2013), when examining responses from over 600 schools in England on inset training days, found that external trainers were more valued than internal trainers. Thus, if it is not possible for more staff to go on external training due to costs or exam groups, it is another recommendation that more external trainers conduct inset training on the Academy premises.

5.8 Summary of the Cultural Web (Element Seven) - the paradigm

In summary of the cultural web and considering the paradigm of the Academy, the following were presented in the previous chapter as key components of its culture: 'student centric', 'staff constraints' and 'leadership issues'. Discussing the breakdown of these components in this chapter has led to the recommendations of improvement for the Academy's development. These core improvements include the redistribution of the Academy towards being more evenly staff and student centric, the eradication of constraints which impact staff effectiveness, and the modification of Academy leadership so there are less issues and it has

increased efficacy for subordinates. In outlining the broad improvements to the Academy's paradigm, the summary of the chapter will now be shared.

5.9 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has set out to provide a discussion of the findings of this research by answering research question two and establishing a greater understanding of the organisational culture of the Academy. In order to achieve this, the themes which have been generated from all stakeholders' responses and were formed around elements of the cultural web, were supplemented with the knowledge acquired from the literature review and methodology chapters. Reviewing these elements highlighted a number of organisational issues and recommendations for improvement at the Academy, which facilitated in answering research question three. Furthermore, these were also supplemented with additional discussion which can be found in appendix 11 and this offers supplementary support in answer of research question three. However it was also noted that there were also responses from across the stakeholders which moved beyond Johnson and Scholes's (2001) cultural web and these could be considered a 'new' element known as 'accountabilities'. These particular findings and the resulting discussion will be explored in the next chapter, which will also consider the conclusions of this study and the recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis concludes by reflecting upon the overall findings from this study. It also considers its success in completing the aim of this research and investigating the organisational culture of an academy. This section begins by considering how the three research questions, which were stated in the introduction, have been answered. Subsequently, the contribution to professional and academic knowledge, and the opportunities for future research, will be discussed.

6.2 Research Questions

In completing this study, the three research questions were as follows:

- **Research question one:** what is the most appropriate method for exploring organisational culture change in the Academy?
- **Research question two:** do different stakeholders share the same perceptions of the organisational culture of the Academy?
- **Research question three:** what are the Academy's organisational culture targets for whole school development to ensure long term sustainability?

Consideration will now be given to the answers that have been obtained to these research questions and the knowledge acquired by this study.

6.3 Research Questions One – the method

The first research question discussed was the attempt to select an appropriate method for exploring the organisational culture of the Academy and considering whether the cultural web model was the most appropriate for the Academy context.

6.3.1 Contributions to knowledge (model selection)

Following a review of relevant literature, a number of criteria were identified which could impact the selection and successful deployment of an organisational culture model. After comparing a number of models against the chosen criteria, the cultural web was selected for exploring the organisational culture of the Academy and this offered an answer to research question one. However in choosing a model, it was noted that a number of authors and researchers simply decide upon, or select a collection of models to discuss, without going into detail about their inclusion and exclusion criteria (Brown, 1998; Senior, 2002; Cameron and Quinn, 2011). Their research may therefore lack clear justification as to why they have chosen a model and it is therefore this process of selection that requires further development. In an attempt to make this process more transparent, table 5 is presented as a method of model selection which has been extrapolated from the findings of research question one. This is in an effort to enable other researchers to have a list of model selection criteria (the first column in table 5) which they can use to identify their desired model's criteria (the second column in table 5). Furthermore, in order to test this method of model selection, the process has been applied to the six organisational culture models examined in this study's literature review (on pp.44-45). The findings, which are displayed in table 6, demonstrate how the cultural web model matches more criteria than the other considered models and therefore provides further justification for its selection, as the most appropriate model for this research. This method is consequently presented to other researchers wishing to select an organisational culture model for their research and represents the first contribution to knowledge of this thesis.

Table 5 –Model selection method and chosen criteria

Model Selection Criteria		Desired Model's Criteria
1. Definition of Culture		(Add)
Researcher Designated		
2. Approach to Culture		(Select)
Objectivist	Independent Variable	
Interpretivist	Dependent Variable	
3. Approach to Change		(Select)
Objectivist	Classification	
Interpretivist	Process-orientated	
4. Scale of Change		(Select)
Evolutionary		
Revolutionary		
5. Locus of Change		(Select)
Department		
Whole Organisation		
Market Segment		
Whole Industry		
Entire Nation		
6. Timescale		(Select)
Weeks (short)		
Months (medium)		
Years (long)		
7. Source of Change		(Select)
Planned (top down strategic)		
Emergent (bottom up developmental)		

Table 6 –Method of model comparison								
Model Selection Criteria		Desired Model's Criteria	Reviewed Models					
			Lundberg's Learning Cycle	Dyer's Cycle of Cultural Evolution	Schein's Life-cycle model	Gagliardi's Framework	Roberts and Brown Compilation	Johnson and Scholes' Cultural Web
1. Definition of Culture		(Add)	(Add or Null if not known)					
Researcher Designated		Beliefs, values and ideology	Artefacts and assumptions	Artefacts, perspectives, values and assumptions	Shared basic assumptions	Assumptions and values	Rites?	Artefacts of the organisation
2. Approach to Culture		(Select)	(X or Null if not known)					
Objectivist	Independent Variable							
Interpretivist	Dependent Variable	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Approach to Change		(Select)	(X or Null if not known)					
Objectivist	Classification							
Interpretivist	Process-orientated	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4. Scale of Change		(Select)	(X or Null if not known)					
Evolutionary						X		
Revolutionary		X	X	X	X		X	X
5. Locus of Change		(Select)	(X or Null if not known)					
Department			X					
Whole Organisation		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Market Segment								
Whole Industry								
Entire Nation								
6. Timescale		(Select)	(X or Null if not known)					
Weeks (short)								
Months (medium)		X						X
Years (long)					X			
7. Source of Change		(Select)	(X or Null if not known)					
Planned (top down strategic)			X	X	X	X	X	X
Emergent (bottom up developmental)		X						X
Criteria Match			4	4	4	3	4	6

6.3.2 Contributions to knowledge (generic context)

Whilst the cultural web model was employed successfully, it was noted that a number of elements could be linked to others. For instance, student results were discussed in both ‘power structures’ and ‘control systems’. Although Johnson and Scholes (1999) discuss linkages between elements and contend that it is not always beneficial to think of the cultural web as containing discrete elements, the model’s visual representation only denotes linkages with neighbouring elements by having intersections between them. Whilst this might mean that intersections could be used to record links between neighbouring elements (something Johnson and Scholes do not utilise in their application of the model), it does not enable linkages between all elements to be recorded. In recognition of this, figure 4 is presented as a new representation of the linkages and this has also been applied to a new modified cultural web (v1.1) which can be viewed in figure 5. The new modified cultural web (v1.1), which is not specific to an academy context, is therefore presented for future application of the model. This also represents another contribution of this thesis to the further investigation of organisational culture on other institutions. Whilst it is not the intention of this thesis to discuss how these linkages apply to this research, the new model has been retrospectively applied to this study and the links between the Academy’s cultural web elements have been identified in table 7. They have then been extrapolated on to the new cultural web model (v1.1), in order to demonstrate its application and this can be viewed in figure 6.

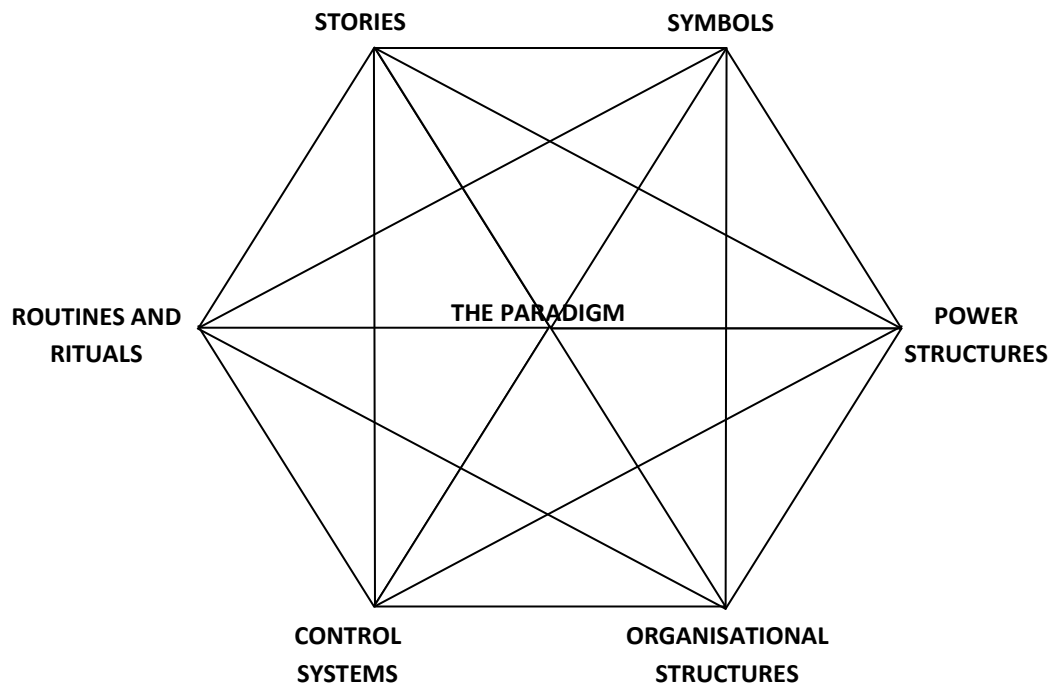


Figure 4 – New representation of the linkages between cultural web elements

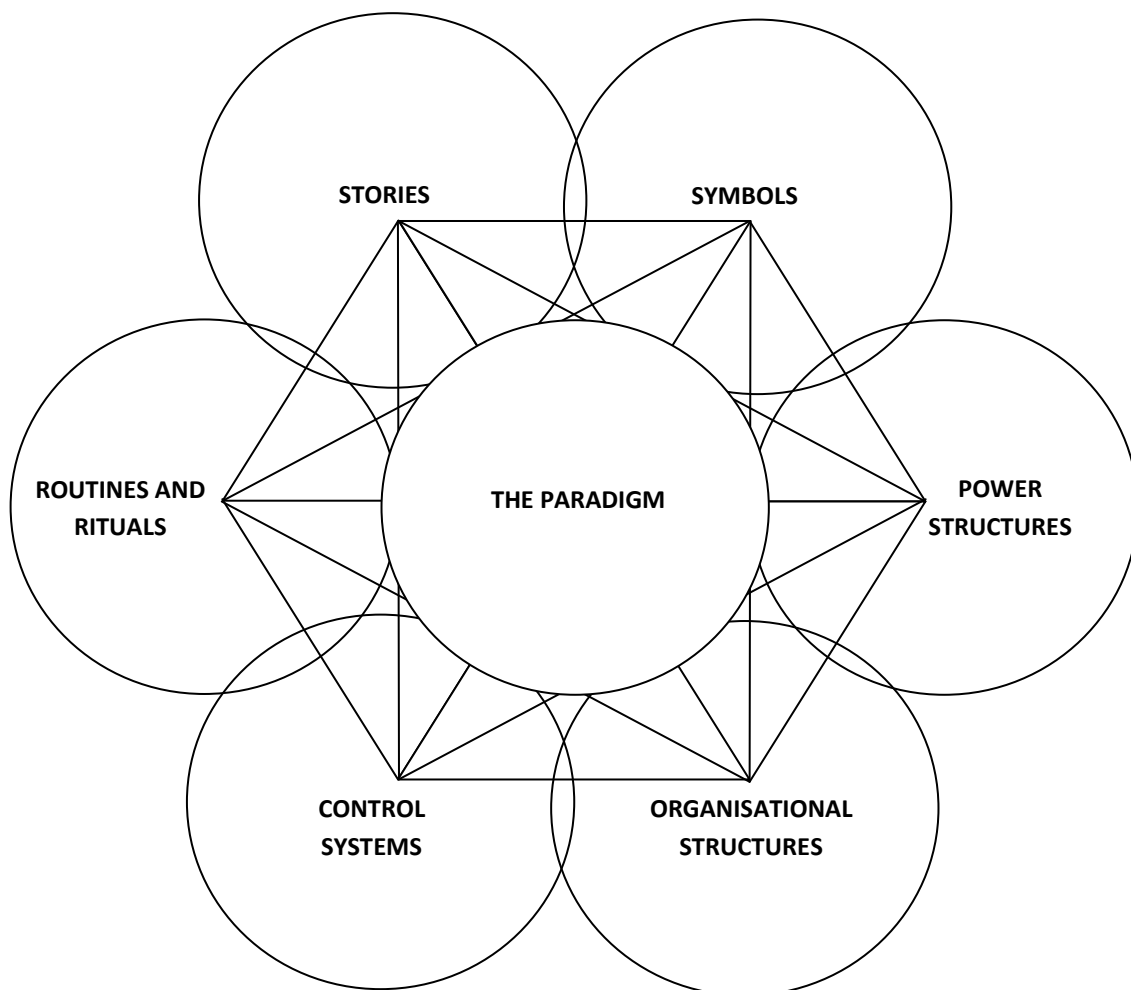


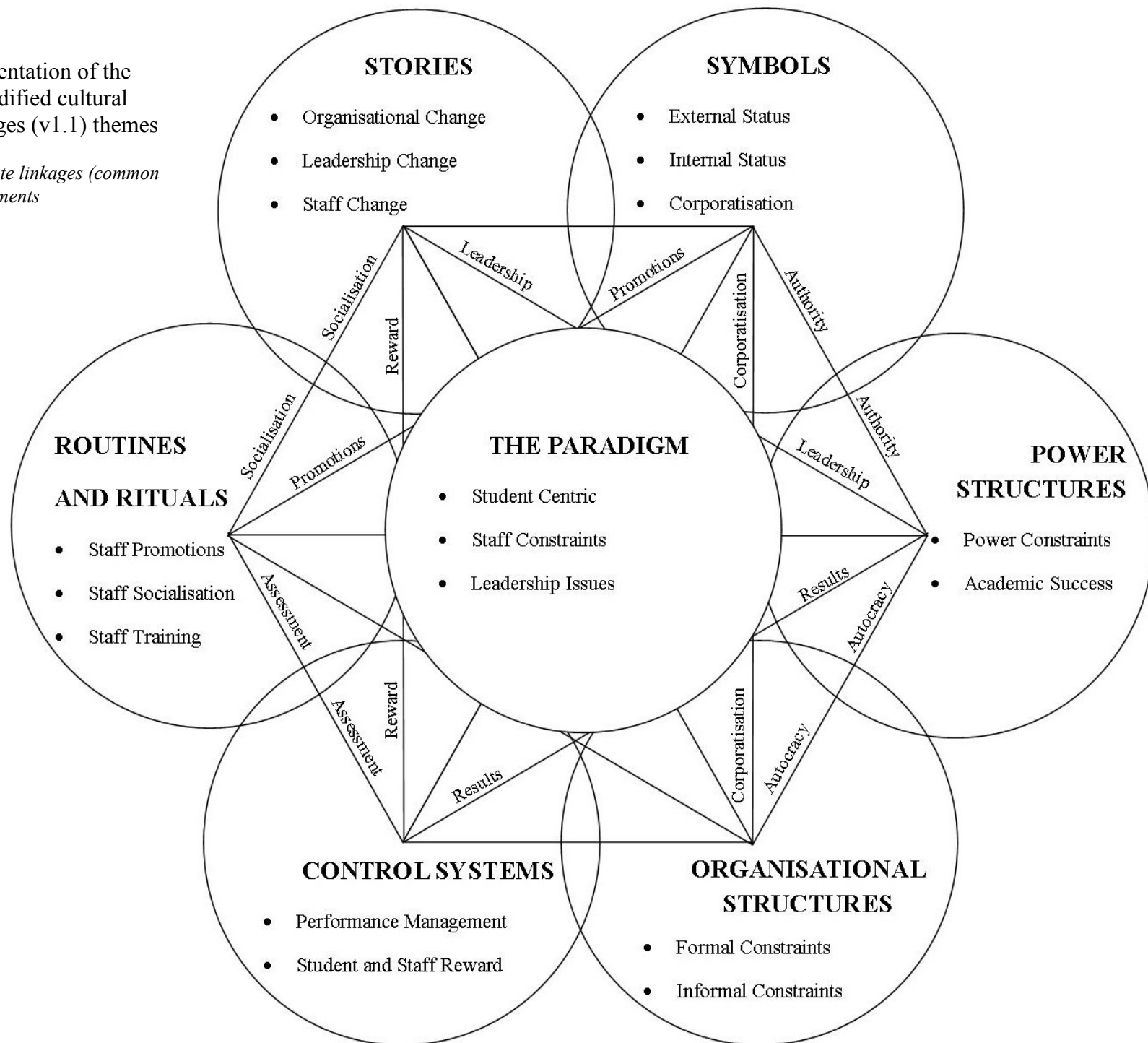
Figure 5 – The modified cultural web with linkages (v1.1) for future applications

Table 7 – Academy cultural web linkages		
Cultural Web Element	Linkage	Cultural Web Element
Stories	Staff socialisation has reduced or is poor	Routines and Rituals
Stories	There is little staff reward other than financial	Control Systems
Stories	Leadership is considered divisive and unresponsive	Power Structures
Symbols	Promotions are utilised as a clandestine staffing tool	Routines and Rituals
Symbols	Corporate behaviour and structures are ubiquitous	Organisational Structures
Symbols	Authority and power is of high importance	Power Structures
Power Structures	Authority and power is of high importance	Symbols
Power Structures	Leadership is considered divisive and unresponsive	Stories
Power Structures	Student results are of paramount importance	Control Systems
Power Structures	The Vice Principal utilises autocratic leadership	Organisational Structures
Organisational Structures	The Vice Principal utilises autocratic leadership	Power Structures
Organisational Structures	Corporate behaviour and structures are ubiquitous	Symbols
Control Systems	Student results are of paramount importance	Power Structures
Control Systems	There is little staff reward other than financial	Stories
Control Systems	Assessment is prevalent and informs training/reward	Routines and Rituals
Routines and Rituals	Assessment is prevalent and informs training/reward	Control Systems
Routines and Rituals	Promotions are utilised as a clandestine staffing tool	Symbols
Routines and Rituals	Staff socialisation has reduced or is poor	Stories

Figure 6 –

A visual representation of the Academy's modified cultural web with linkages (v1.1) themes

N.B. – lines indicate linkages (common links) between elements



6.3.3 Contributions to Knowledge (academy context)

This study is also able to offer contributions to the existing work on organisational culture and schools by modifying the deployment of the cultural web for academies. This was established by exploring the dataset from this research and identifying common themes which permeate across a number of cultural web elements. Following analysis of common themes, ‘accountabilities’ was identified as an additional element of the cultural web (figure 7). This included accountability to Ofsted and “...the fear that if results are poor... Ofsted would be back in here (the Academy) and we would be back to square one” (I6, T, SLT).

Accountability to the government which “...goes down to the senior managers of the school, which cascades then down... to the teachers” (F2, T, SMR, 4). Accountability and constant monitoring by superiors at the Academy which means staff feel “you can’t make a decision” (F4, T, SMR, 2) and accountability to the main sponsor which includes following their “steps and expectations” (Q17, T, SNR). In completing the analysis of this new element, the ‘accountabilities’ themes and sub-themes can be viewed in table 8 and the new completed modified cultural web (v2.0) can be viewed in figure 8.

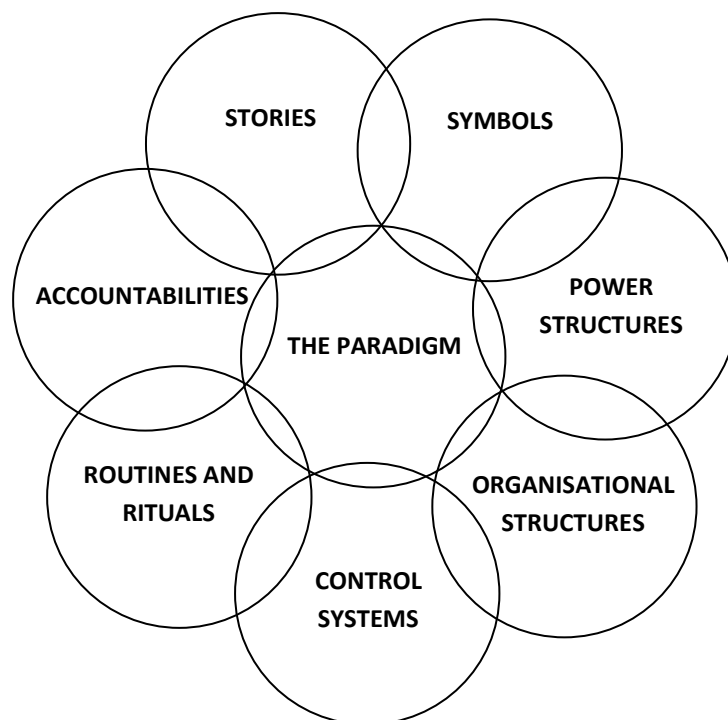


Figure 7 – The modified cultural web (v2.0) for future application on academies

Table 8 - Cultural Web Element Eight - Themes and Sub-themes
Theme Sixteen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Agents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fear of Ofsted ○ Government Targets
Theme Seventeen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Agents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitoring by Superiors ○ Monitoring by Sponsor

In summary, the high level of accountability upon schools is also agreed by Bisschoff and Watkins (2008), who discuss the impact of external bodies such as the Department of Education (DfE). Keddie (2013) adds to this discussion and concludes it is imperative that there is a continued examination of the increasing impact of the culture of accountability, and assessing performance, upon schools. ‘Accountabilities’ is therefore recommended as another element that should be added to the cultural web (Johnson and Scholes, 1999) for future deployment on academies. The fully completed modified cultural web with linkages (v2.1) can be viewed in figure 9 and in providing further support for this new element, the detailed findings have been presented using the same method utilised in chapter four’s presentation of findings (pp.80-82) and this can be viewed in appendix 12. Additionally, the associated description for this new element is as follows:

Accountabilities are the associated stakeholders and agencies that members of the organisation must report to and whom may also make a judgement on its effectiveness. These can also be the associated performance targets or benchmarks that the organisation must meet in order to be considered performing within or above expected parameters.

Lastly, as outlined in this and the previous section, this study has implications for future practice and, in order to further inform the literature and research regarding academies and organisational culture, I intend to disseminate the knowledge gained by this study in a range of articles suitably pitched for either an academic audience or professional colleagues.

Figure 8 –
A visual representation of the
Academy's modified cultural
web (v2.0) themes and sub-
themes

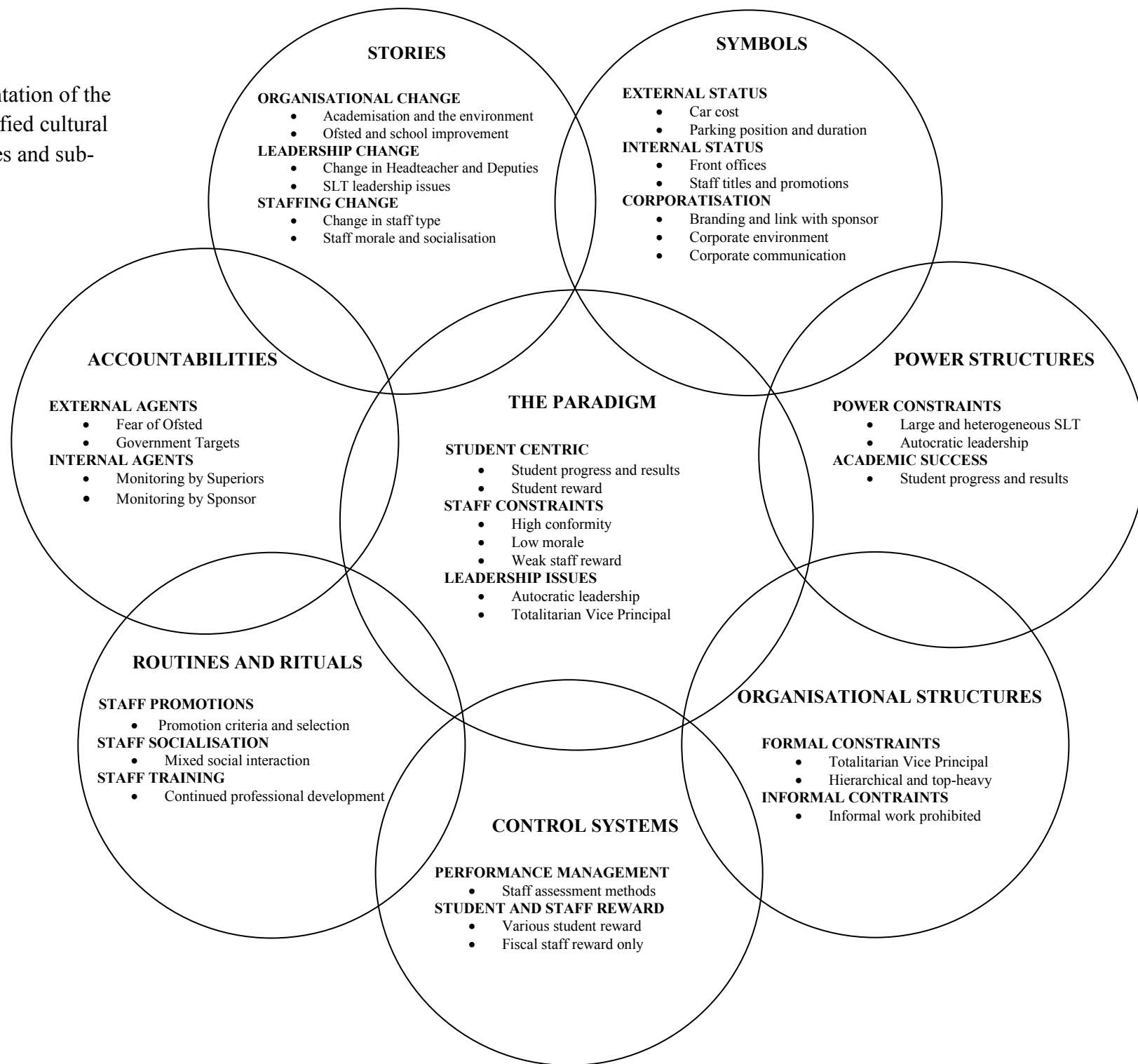
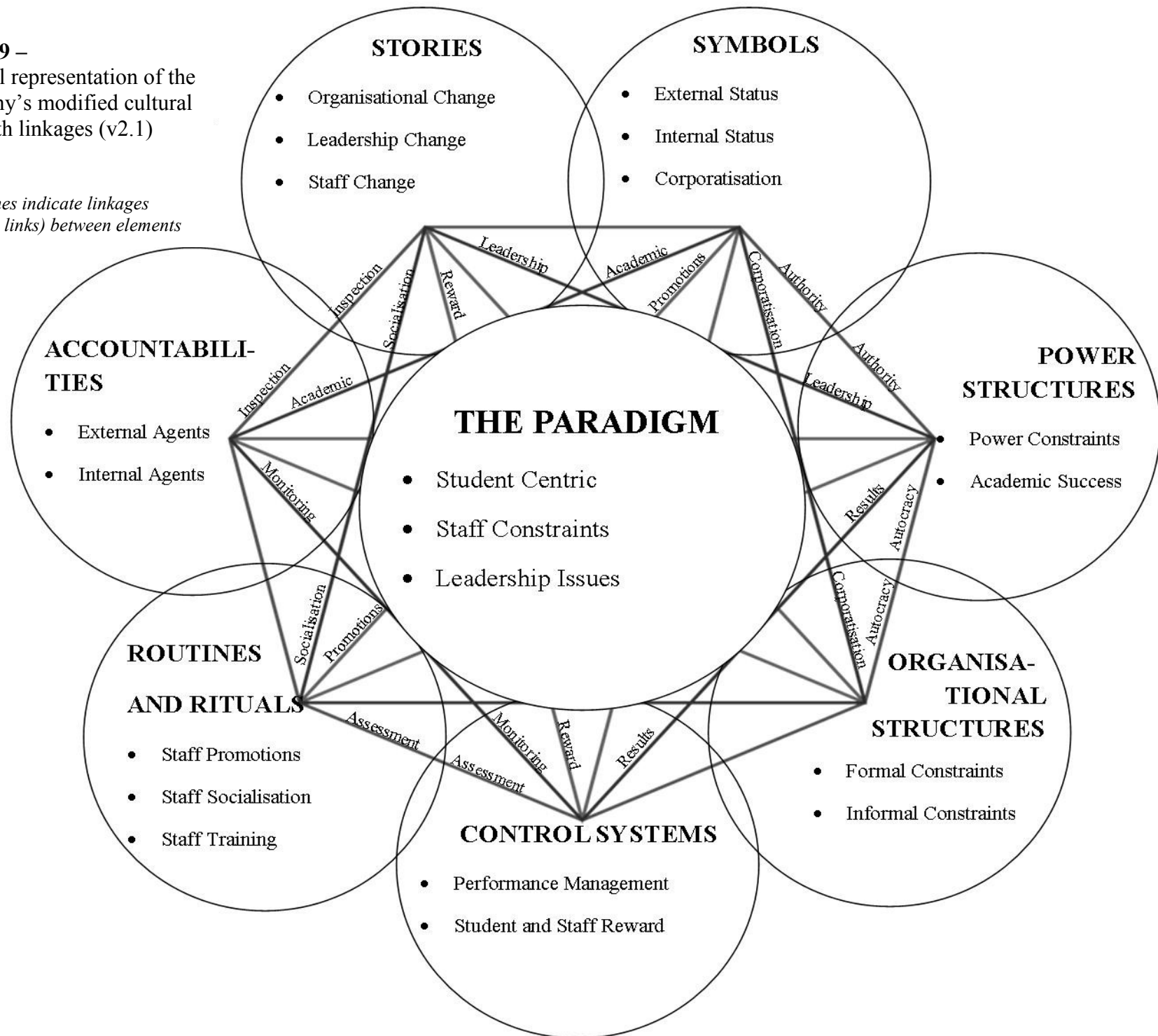


Figure 9 –

A visual representation of the Academy's modified cultural web with linkages (v2.1) themes

N.B. – lines indicate linkages (common links) between elements



6.4 Research Question Two - the perceptions

In next answering research question two and examining different stakeholders' perceptions of the Academy's culture, it was noted during the selection of the model to be employed for this research that a number of studies often assume the existence of a monoculture (Lancaster and Di Milia, 2015). It was therefore deemed important that this study should consider the views of different hierarchical levels in the Academy, as well as both teaching and non-teaching stakeholders. Subsequently, the subcultures identified for examination in this study can be seen in table 9.

Table 9 – Examined subcultures		
Hierarchical Level	Teaching	Non-teaching
	All Staff	
	Staff with Management Responsibility (SMR)	
	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	
	Staff with No Responsibility (SNR)	

In first reviewing the perceptions of different hierarchical levels, a number of differences were highlighted and these are displayed in table 10. Key observations include the SMR and SLT agreeing on a number of issues such as the impact of Ofsted, increased conformity of staff and the importance of student progress and results. However the SMR differed with the SLT on some areas, such as identifying issues with the SLT leadership. They also perceived staff morale to be low, which was further explored by the SLT who highlighted the poor staff socialisation as a factor which may be related to reduced morale. The SLT also identified communication as being quite corporate which was also observed by the SNR, who noted an

increased frequency of emails. The SNR also perceived that power and decision making rests with the SLT, which ironically was also an issue for the SLT who considered the Academy to be too hierarchical and top-heavy. However there was consensus on a number of perceptions, such as the importance of academisation for initiating change, the total control of the Vice Principal and the high importance of exam results.

Whilst in next reviewing the perceptions of teaching versus non-teaching staff, again a number of differences were observed which can be viewed in table 11. Some key observations by teaching staff include the improvement in exam results, autocratic leadership and reward being based solely on pay. Whilst the non-teaching staff highlighted that their jobs were now being filled by graduates and noted the lack of reward. In summary of addressing this research question, although it has been identified that there are a number of triangulated and agreed perceptions, some key differences have also been observed in the views of different stakeholders. Brown (1998) highlights that differences in subcultures can be a key factor for conflict and can reduce the effectiveness of an organisation. Therefore the variations observed in this study illustrate the importance of examining different subcultures in an academy and gives credence to their consideration in future research.

Table 10 - Hierarchical perceptions				
Cultural Web	All Staff Perceptions	SLT Perceptions	SMR Perceptions	SNR Perceptions
Stories	Academisation has caused many changes			
		Focused on the impact of Ofsted		
		Principal responsible for improvements		Previous Headteacher was more supportive
			SLT leadership has issues	
		Staff are conformist		Key personalities have left
		Staff socialisation is poor	Staff morale is low	
Symbols			Variations in cars noticed	
				Front offices important – particularly student services
		Promotions are secretive		
	The branding reinforces the link with the main sponsor			
		The new building is corporate and sterile		
		Communication is corporate		Email is used too frequently
Power Structures		A key concern is the progress and results of students		
Organisational Structures	The Vice Principal has total control of the Academy			
		The Academy is hierarchical and top-heavy		Power and decision making rests with the SLT
Control Systems	Exam results are the key data measurement for staff			
Rituals and Routines	Various types of student reward exist			
	Promotions are preferentially based			
	Staff are generally friendly			
		Minimal external training is offered		

Table 11 - Teaching versus non-teaching perceptions		
Cultural Web	Teaching Perceptions	Non-teaching Perceptions
Stories	Observed improvements in exam results	
		Non-teaching jobs now filled by graduates
Symbols		Car cost noticed
	Whose first on the car park is noticed	
	Most important staff are in the front offices	
Power Structures	SLT are not united and do not have a shared vision	
	The leadership style is autocratic	
Organisational Structures	Informal work and initiatives are prohibited	
Control Systems	The only staff reward is pay	There is no staff reward
Rituals and Routines		

6.5 Research Question Three – the targets (contributions to practice)

Through completing this research a number of organisational issues have been identified at the Academy. In order to answer the final research question, a selection of academy improvement targets has been identified for suggested whole school improvement. These include organisational issues which may impact other academies and includes suggested targets for improvements. These are summarised in table 12 and represent a list of issues and improvements which other academy leaders may consider in relation to their organisation. This also represents the contributions that this thesis offers to the improvement of academy practice. As previously noted, a more detailed plan, of specific Academy improvement targets relating directly to the case study, can be found in appendix 11.

Table 12 – Academy improvement targets

Organisational Issues	Recommendation for Improvement
STORIES	
Leadership is orientated towards students.	Leadership should meet the needs of both students and staff.
SLT's leadership lacks a shared vision.	The Principal should develop a shared vision with the SLT.
The pressures of conformity negatively impacts staff.	Alternate staff views should be considered and where necessary praised.
A skills shortage is affecting the non-teaching staff.	Tailored training should be initiated for non-teaching staff.
Staff socialisation has reduced.	Team building events should be organised to encourage staff socialisation.
SYMBOLS	
External status barriers exist between the SLT and staff.	Efforts should be made to reduce overt external status barriers.
Long and unhealthy work hours are encouraged.	The link between work hours and staff promotion should be removed.
SLT office groupings create internal status barriers.	The SLT offices should be positioned so they are near the staff they supervise.
Promotions and titles lack transparency.	Promotions should be celebrated and announced to all staff.
Branding linked with the sponsor has created 'facades'.	Promoting the links with the sponsor may help boost student recruitment.
Lack of natural light can negatively impact staff health.	Staff should be encouraged to go outside during the day.
Formal communication reduces staff comfort and innovation.	Formal communication should be more evenly mixed with informal communication.
Emails are excessive and persistent.	An email acceptable use policy should exist and be shared.
POWER STRUCTURES	
SLT is divisive as some have more power than others.	The SLT decision making should be based upon democratic consensus.
Autocratic leadership of a Vice Principal erodes the SLT's power.	The SLT should be assigned tasks on expertise and working parties formed for delivery.
The sole focus on progress and results negatively impact students.	The cost to benefit ratio of academic initiatives should be evaluated.
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES	
The only Vice Principal has totalitarian control.	Two Vice Principals should be in post, each with a clear list of responsibilities.
A top heavy staffing structure means those lower down have little input.	Leaders should actively seek the views of subordinates.
Bureaucracy slows any potential informal opportunities.	Working groups should be formed to increase collegiality and reduce bureaucracy.
An influx of new staff has caused an increase in internal department politics.	Time should be provided for departmental socialisation.
Lack of teacher time and reward are additional barriers to informal work.	Staff time should be reserved for informal work and reward given accordingly.
CONTROL SYSTEMS	
Performance management does not recognise individual pupil characteristics.	Pupil contextual factors should be shared when reviewing teacher performance.
The priority of results makes any other staff assessment method inconsequential.	A number of equally weighted methods should be used to assess teachers.
Non-teaching staff have no system for measuring performance.	Performance management should be introduced for non-teaching staff.
The student reward systems are not reviewed for their efficacy	Feedback on the reward systems should be gained from both students and teachers.
Department reward power is reduced as it is controlled by the Vice Principal.	The subject rewards should be decided and issued by departments.
There is no staff reward with the exception of pay for teaching staff.	Staff reward schemes should be initiated for both teaching and non-teaching staff.
Pay is used as a retention method to enforce conformity.	Staff retention should be managed through an effective career management programme.
Overly generous pay can lead to teaching staff feeling trapped and stale.	Performance-related pay should be used for improving employee motivation.
For the non-teaching staff there is no financial reward.	Bonuses should be issued for non-teaching staff and linked to performance management.

RITUAL AND ROUTINES	
Promotions are preferentially based and pre-decided.	Open competition should be encouraged for promotions.
Promotions are used for staff retention and this inhibits improvement.	There should be an even balance of internal and external appointments.
The high workload of the SLT negatively impacts their relationships with staff.	The SLT should attend staff social events in order to form a stronger communal culture.
Reduced socialisation is attributed to having less time and locations to socialise.	A designated area and time should be allotted in order to encourage staff socialisation.
Minimal external training erodes teaching staffs' efficacy.	A large number of staff should be involved in external training.

6.6 Reflecting on the Study

This study has been successful in deploying the cultural web and gaining an assessment of the organisational culture of the Academy. However in reflecting on its success, it is acknowledged that the sample response rates were more heavily weighted towards teaching staff as opposed to non-teaching staff. This may therefore have caused some bias in the findings of this research. However Bryman (2008) contends that it is incredibly difficult to remove all bias from research and have a truly representative sample. Furthermore, Bush and Middlewood (2013) contend that non-teaching staff are often neglected in educational research. They may also be less willing to be involved in academia since they may have not been to university and may be less familiar with the research process. It is therefore considered beneficial that non-teaching staff are involved in this research, despite the smaller sample in relation to teaching staff. Additionally, it may have also been beneficial to interview a sample of governors from the Academy. This may have offered further comparisons between different hierarchical levels and highlighted whether their understanding of the Academy's culture matches the views of its staff. However McMahon *et al.* (1997) discuss governors meeting just twice a term. Whilst McMahon (2003) furthers this debate and notes that governors can also be in full time employment. Thus given the minimal amount of time they spend at the Academy, they may not have as developed an understanding of its culture when compared to staff, or as proportional role in creating it. It is therefore deemed appropriate that the governors did not form part of the research sample.

In next examining the questionnaire, it was designed so as to offer open ended responses, however this made completion of the questionnaire and data analysis more time consuming. It may therefore have been more advisable to have created a closed questionnaire with set responses. However given the open ended nature of the cultural web, this may have limited

responses and reduced the efficacy of this method. Support for open ended responses is provided by Denscombe (1998) who contends that they can help allow for the full richness and complexity of respondents' answers. Finally, given the sensitive nature of participants offering contributions on the organisations they work for, and given my role as an both an insider researcher and senior leader, it is hoped all participants felt comfortable in providing 'frank' opinions, without fear of repercussions. For instance Bush (2007) discusses tensions in insider research which can be heightened when it is conducted by powerful people in an organisation, as well as creating issues with regards to the quality of data participants feel able to reveal without fear of harm. However given these concerns, Lomax (2007) concludes that insider research is still beneficial because it has the opportunity of transforming our own understanding. The following quotation is also offered as a position that this researcher aspired to, in order to make participants feel comfortable in expressing their 'true' opinions and ensuring this study has generated an accurate assessment of the organisational culture of the Academy:

"I want my research to be authentic... I dislike deception and manipulation of others. I see my emphasis on the importance of co-researching rather than treating others as respondents or informants as related to my wish to empower others in the research relationship" (Lomax, 2007, p.168).

6.7 Future Research

This research has utilised a mixed method embedded case study approach for the Academy context. However, whilst it is acknowledged that this type of research has a number of benefits it can be also be argued to possess limitations, particularly to the extent to which it can make claims about the population from the case that it represents (Bassey, 1999). One

solution to this would be for research to be completed in a number of other cases. This is agreed by Noor (2008) who maintains that whilst case studies have real benefits, such as the ability to gain a holistic view of a phenomenon and capturing the emergent properties of an organisation, the results of findings from multiple cases are needed in order to lead to generalisation and some form of replication. Consequently, this case study may be effective in examining this particular Academy context, but if it is repeated in other similar academies then the results may lead to some form of generalisable findings. This is developed by Flick (2009) who suggests that limitations in generalisation can be tackled by conducting multiple case studies. Research on multiple academies is therefore identified as a target for future research. Alternatively, this study could be expanded to assess the organisational culture of all the schools which are part the main sponsor's network. This would offer both an assessment of the main sponsor's culture as well comparisons between its other schools.

Another consideration for future research would be to expand the study to include students. For instance Mortimore and MacBeath (2003) contend that researchers should work in partnership with students during the process of school improvement, instead of acting on behalf of them or assuming knowledge of their viewpoint. Whilst this might be feasibly more difficult, since the Academy has over 1200 students and it would be more time consuming to gain all their views, it would offer an opportunity to compare staff perceptions with students. A further consideration for this study would be to implement the Academy improvements which have been identified in this thesis (see appendix 11) and therefore instigate a piece of action research. The Academy's culture could then be re-examined to see whether there has been a transformation in its organisational culture. Such an approach is supported by Altrichter *et al.* (2008) who note that conducting action research in schools can have

remarkable results and can make important contributions to the knowledge of the teaching profession.

Finally, in examining areas of future research in relation to organisational culture, the model selection method could be reviewed with a greater range of models to see whether there are others which could be utilised for this research context. Alternatively, it could also be tested to see how successful it is at selecting an organisational culture model for other research contexts and institutions. Next, the modified cultural web with linkages (v1.1) could be investigated on other institutions, including those outside of an educational setting, to see how useful it is at highlighting the linkages for other organisations. Whilst the modified cultural web for academies (v2.0), which now includes an element for ‘accountabilities’ and linkages (v2.1), could be tested to see whether these additions are of benefit in offering greater insight into an academy’s culture. This may be particularly useful, since there are increasing demands for schools to be more accountable and this could be one method to assess the impact on an academy’s culture (Hopkins, 2001, Mulford, 2003).

6.8 Conclusion

In summary of this chapter, my unique role as an insider researcher in an Academy case study, where I have worked my way up from teacher to senior leader over a period of ten years, has provided access to a rich data stream and a distinct perspective. This has enabled answers to be obtained to the three research questions of this thesis and also contributions to be made to both theory and practice. This includes contributions to other organisational researchers, such as demonstrating a list of criteria and a method for selecting an organisational culture model. It also includes a modified cultural web which offers a visualisation of the linkages between model elements, for utilisation on other organisations.

Furthermore, it has also begun to fill the void of organisational culture change literature being weighted towards business and not educational management. This has been completed by offering modification to the cultural web with a new 'accountabilities' element, in order to offer a more detail understanding of an academies culture. Additionally, it has also illustrated the assessment of an Academy's culture from different stakeholders' perceptions, including the often under researched admin staff. Finally, it has presented a series of recommendations for improvement to academies and the Academy case study. Having completed this thesis, I also hope to begin the process of supplementing the abundance of research on the attainment of academies, with research on their culture. In an effort that the full impact of academies can be assessed and whether Tony Blair's declaration is indeed true, that "in a few years time when all schools will be academies, we'll see a transformed education system" (Northampton Academy, 2007).

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Cultural Web Elements Description

- “The **paradigm** is the set of assumptions about the organisation which is held in common and taken for granted within the organisation.
- The **routine** ways that members of the organisation behave towards each other, and that link different parts of the organisation. These are the “way we do things around here” which at their best lubricate the working of the organisation, and may provide a distinctive and beneficial organisational competency. However they can also represent a taken-for-grantedness of how things should happen, which is extremely difficult to change and highly protective of core assumptions in the paradigm.
- The **rituals** of organisational life, such as training programmes, promotion and assessment point to what is important in the organisation, reinforce “the way we do things around here” and signal what is especially valued
- The **stories** told by members of the organisation to each other, to outsiders, to new recruits and so on, embed the present in its organisational history and flag up important events and personalities, as well as mavericks who “deviate from the norm”.
- Other **symbolic aspects** of organisations such as logos, offices, cars and titles, or the type of language and terminology commonly used, these symbols become a shorthand representation of the nature of the organisation.
- The formalised **control systems**, measurements and reward systems that monitor and therefore emphasise what is important in the organisation, and focus attention and activity.
- **Power structures** are also likely to be associated with the key constructs of the paradigm. The most powerful managerial groupings in the organisation are likely to

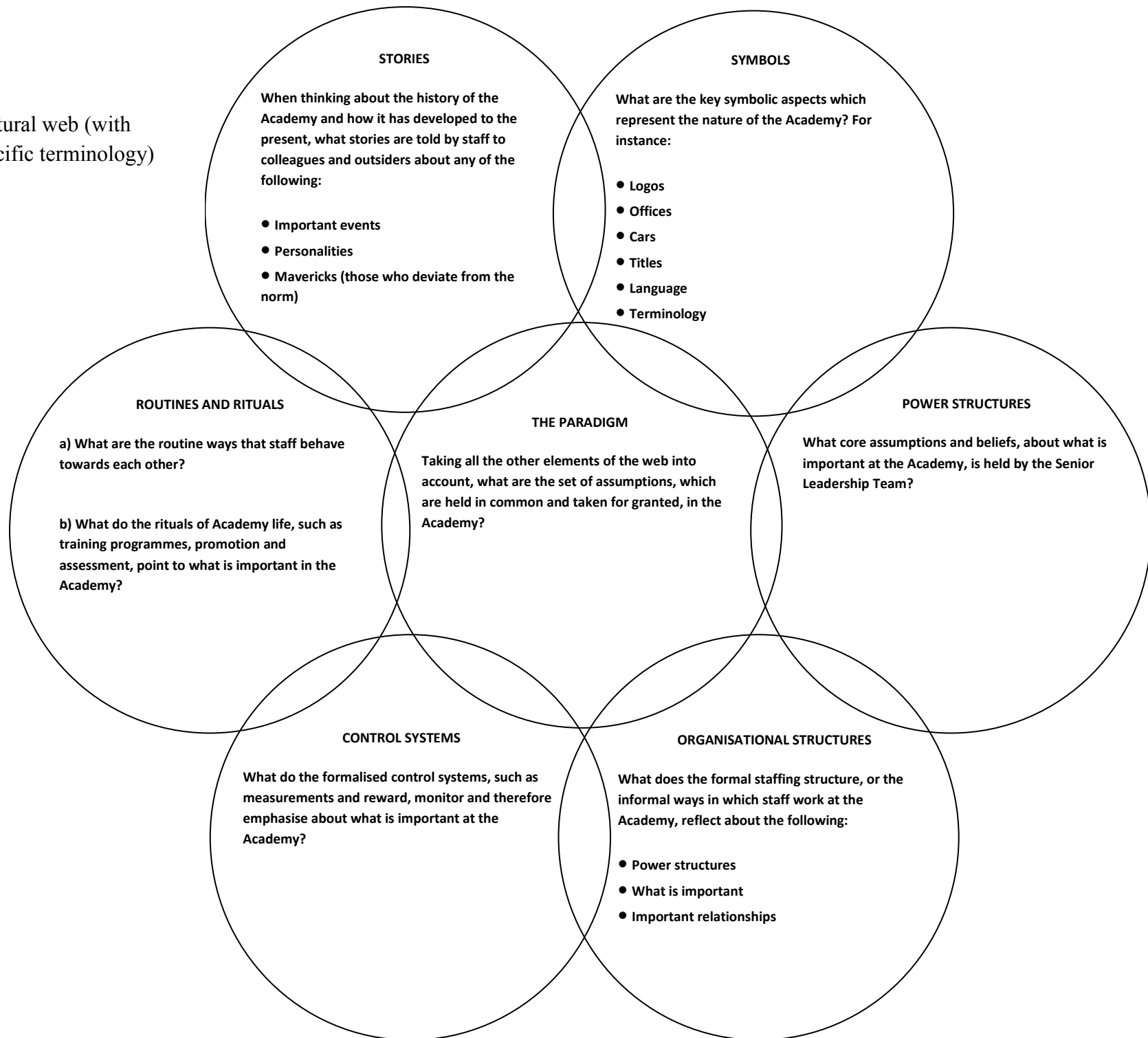
be the ones most associated with core assumptions and beliefs about what is important.

- In turn the formal **organisational structure**, or the more informal ways in which the organisations work are likely to reflect power structures and, again, delineate important relationships and emphasise what is important in the organisation”

(Johnson 2001, pp.4-5).

Appendix 2

Modified cultural web (with academy specific terminology)



Appendix 3

Interview Topics

1) STORIES

When thinking about the history of the Academy and how it has developed to the present, what stories are told by staff to colleagues and outsiders about any of the following:

- ☐ Important events
- ☐ Personalities
- ☐ Mavericks (those who deviate from the norm)

2) SYMBOLS

What are the key symbolic aspects which represent the nature of the Academy? For instance:

- ☐ Logos
- ☐ Offices
- ☐ Cars
- ☐ Titles
- ☐ Language
- ☐ Terminology

3) POWER STRUCTURES

What core assumptions and beliefs, about what is important at the Academy, is held by the Senior Leadership Team?

4) ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

What does the formal staffing structure, or the informal ways in which staff work at the Academy, reflect about the following:

- ☐ Power structures
- ☐ What is important
- ☐ Important relationships

5) CONTROL SYSTEMS

What do the formalised control systems, such as measurements and reward, monitor and therefore emphasise about what is important at the Academy?

6) ROUTINES AND RITUALS

a) What are the routine ways that staff behave towards each other?

b) What do the rituals of Academy life, such as training programmes, promotion and assessment, point to what is important in the Academy?

7) THE PARADIGM

Taking all the other elements of the web into account, what are the set of assumptions, which are held in common and taken for granted, in the Academy?

Questionnaire

If you wish to be entered into the prize draw please tick:		
QUESTIONS	ANSWERS	
STORIES		
What key events come to mind when thinking about your knowledge of the Academy's history?		
What staff personalities come to mind when thinking about your knowledge of the Academy's history?		
What staff mavericks (those that behave differently or don't follow the rules) come to mind when thinking about your knowledge of the Academy's history?		
SYMBOLS		
What are the key logos or symbols which stand out at the Academy?		
Which offices stand out at the Academy?		
Which cars stand out at the Academy?		

Which job titles stand out at the Academy?	
What language (the way people communicate) stands out at the Academy?	
What terminology (Academy specific words) stands out at the Academy?	
POWER STRUCTURES	
What are the Senior Leadership Team's core beliefs about what is important at the Academy?	
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES	
What does the formal staffing structure suggest about where the power of the Academy is?	
What do the informal ways staff work together suggest about where the power of the Academy is?	

What does the formal staffing structure suggest about what is important at the Academy?	
What do the informal ways staff work together suggest about what is important at the Academy?	
What does the formal staffing structure suggest about what the important relationships in the Academy are?	
What do the informal ways staff work together suggest about what the important relationships in the Academy are?	
CONTROL SYSTEMS	
What do the Academy measurement systems suggest about what is important at the Academy?	
What do the Academy reward systems suggest about what is important at the Academy?	

RITUALS AND ROUTINES	
What are the routine ways that staff behave towards each other?	
What do the staff training programmes, suggest about what is important to the Academy?	
What do the staff promotions, suggest about what is important to the Academy?	
What do the staff assessment methods, suggest about what is important to the Academy?	
THE PARADIGM	
Looking back at your answers, what do you think are the core beliefs of the Academy?	

Appendix 5

Consent Form – Questionnaire

My name is Jonathan Morris. I am doing research on a project entitled: What is the ‘cultural web’ of the Academy? The project is part of my Education Doctorate, which I am completing at the University of Birmingham. I am directing the project and can be contacted at the following, should you have any questions:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the project. Before we start I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;
- You may miss any questions you do not wish to answer;
- Your consent, for agreeing to take part in this research, will be viewed as the successful return of this questionnaire;
- Until the 31st July 2015, you are free to withdraw your response, after you have taken part.

While a serial number is used for the identification of returned questionnaires, the responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researchers. It will however be used in this research, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included.

Please return the completed questionnaire either via email _____ or by depositing a paper copy in the questionnaire return box in the staff room.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me either in person or via the information provided.

Serial Number:

(Researcher to keep signed copy and leave unsigned copy with respondent)

Appendix 6

Consent Form – Focus Group

(To be read out by the researcher before the beginning of the session. One copy of the form will be left with the respondent; one copy to be signed by the respondent and kept by the researcher.)

My name is Jonathan Morris. I am doing research on a project entitled: What is the ‘cultural web’ of the Academy? The project is part of my Education Doctorate, which I am completing at the University of Birmingham. I am directing the project and can be contacted at the following, should you have any questions:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the project. Before we start I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;
- You are free to refuse to answer any questions;
- You are free to withdraw at any time during the focus group;
- Until the 31st July 2015, you are free to withdraw your response, after you have taken part.

This focus group will be recorded; the recording will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researchers. It will however be transcribed and used in this research, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included.

Please sign the form to show that you have read the comments and agree to take part.

_____ (signed)

_____ (printed)

(Researcher to keep signed copy and leave unsigned copy with respondent)

Appendix 7

Consent Form – Interview

(To be read out by the researcher before the beginning of the session. One copy of the form will be left with the respondent; one copy to be signed by the respondent and kept by the researcher.)

My name is Jonathan Morris. I am doing research on a project entitled: What is the ‘cultural web’ of the Academy? The project is part of my Education Doctorate, which I am completing at the University of Birmingham. I am directing the project and can be contacted at the following, should you have any questions:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the project. Before we start I would like to emphasise that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary;
- You are free to refuse to answer any questions;
- You are free to withdraw at any time during the interview;
- Until the 31st July 2015, you are free to withdraw your response, after you have taken part.

This interview will be recorded; the recording will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researchers. It will however be transcribed and used in this research, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included.

Please sign the form to show that you have read the comments and agree to take part.

_____ (signed)

_____ (printed)

(Researcher to keep signed copy and leave unsigned copy with respondent)

Appendix 8

Interview Transcript Example

Line	Transcript	Notes
1	Interviewer: So the first element is to do with stories. So when thinking	
2	about the history of the Academy and how it has developed to the present,	
3	what stories are told by staff to colleagues and outsiders about in the	
4	following: important events, personalities or mavericks which are deemed	
5	as those who deviate from the norm? So when thinking about the Academy	
6	as we know today, thinking about the history and that can include the	
7	predecessor school, what stories stand out to you first of all in terms of	
8	important the event?	
9		
10	Senior Leader C: Well I suppose the first thing would be becoming an	
11	academy and obviously the sponsor that was given, if that makes sense? So	
12	moving from state school if you like to an academy that would be something I	
13	suppose that he would speak to colleagues and outside people. How that's	
14	impacted and changed the school environment. Does that make sense?	
15		
16	Interviewer: Yes	
17		
18	Senior Leader C: So that's where I would start I suppose and what stories	
19	would be told? The intake, I suppose the student intake. That might be	
20	something that would be of relevance.	
21		
22	Interviewer: Do you think that's changed since becoming an academy?	
23		
24	Senior Leader C: Yes I think it has, going back to my history of the former	
25	school. I think that the sponsor has changed, to a degree, the students that	
26	are coming to the school, which I think is backed up by the data of where	
27	they're coming from. You know where you look at the map. So that would be	
28	the first thing.	
29		
30	Interviewer: Do you think there was the reason why it stands out becoming an	
31	academy, as a key story? Obviously we can superficially say it's important	
32	because it is becoming an academy. Are there any other reasons why it stands	
33	out at all?	
34		
35	Senior Leader C: What do you mean?	
36		
37	Interviewer: So looking at all the stories of the Academy and the history of it,	
38	do you think there's a particular reason why that stands out other than it	
39	being a change from state school to an academy.	
40		
41	Senior Leader C: As in our intake?	
42		
43	Interviewer: In general.	
44		
45	Senior Leader C: In general I suppose, would I want to pick up on the schools	
46	in this area have been in a state of flux. So that's changed hasn't it?	
47		
48	Interviewer: Yes.	
49		

Line	Transcript	Notes
50	Senior Leader C: I suppose without going into names. The key schools that	Location anonymised.
51	perhaps would pull in certain students, they're perhaps not doing as well now.	
52	Is that what you mean?	
53		
54	Interviewer: I'm just curious why that story resonates with you, as there are	
55	potentially quite a lot of different stories you could have picked up on?	
56		
57	Senior Leader C: Well to me when I first started here you know, for example.	
58	We used to get a lot of children coming in from different parts the city. They	
59	weren't necessary locals because they would go to the local schools that were	
60	perceived as being perhaps better, for want of a better word. Now not so	School names anonymised
61	much so. Do you want me to say the names of the schools?	
62		
63	Interviewer: It will all be anonymised.	
64		
65	Senior Leader C: Well, for example school A and B. They have been struggling	
66	and historically they would have taken, for want of a better word, the better	
67	students. Particularly school B, but I think within community now, that that's	
68	not held with as high esteem as it used to be. So does that then coincide with	
69	the fact that we've then become academy, with the sponsor that parents in	
70	the area would think stand for education. Does that make sense?	Name anonymised
71		
72	Interviewer: Yes it does make sense. Do you think we were chosen because of	
73	underperformance?	
74		
75	Senior Leader C: Oh yes, going back I think so, for the local authority perhaps.	
76	I can tell a little tale from a particular member of staff that is retired now. He	
77	said it's like having a fleet of cars and which one do the local authority want to	
78	get rid of? Well the one that perhaps, it's the one that is too expensive to run	
79	or not running so well. Let's sell that one off.	
80		Ofsted – Notice to Improve (NTI)
81	Interviewer: We'll that's an interesting analogy.	
82		
83	Senior Leader C: Yeah Fred Newman said it.	
84		
85	Interviewer: I've heard his name mentioned before.	
86		
87	Senior Leader C: So he would say you know, that's the metaphor he would	
88	use. It's like the local authority getting rid of one of their fleet of cars, perhaps	
89	the one that's most troublesome.	
90		
91	Interviewer: Do you think that's how we were viewed by the local authority?	
92		
93	Senior Leader C: My opinion, I think so perhaps. At the time it wasn't very	
94	clear we were at the point, where we had our Notice to Improve if you	
95	remember. I don't know if you were here.	
96		
97	Interviewer: Yeah I was here.	
98		
99	Senior Leader C: So and the other schools in this area. Well I suppose School	

Line	Transcript	Notes
100	A wasn't doing very well but School B was fine. I think we were chosen	
101	perhaps as they perceived there could be issues here.	
102		
103	Interviewer: So do you think it was linked with the Notice to Improve? Is that	
104	quite an important story?	
105		
106	Senior Leader C: It could be, I think they had. I think we were probably in the	
107	frame before then. We were in the frame under the old Head, definitely I'd	
108	say. Obviously the inspection under him, just before our new Head was fine, it	
109	was satisfactory. So no it was before then, from what I remember.	
110		
111	Interviewer: So you don't think they're quite closely linked the NTI and the	
112	Academy. Quite important stories in terms of this Academy's history?	
113		
114	Senior Leader C: To a degree but I think we were highlighted before then.	
115		
116	Interviewer: Okay and looking at key personalities that you might think of. Is	
117	there anyone that comes mind at all? In the Academy's history, so looking at	
118	stories that are told about the academy and its history, looking at key	
119	personalities. Are any stories told about particular people that are of interest	
120	and resonate with you?	
121		
122	Senior Leader C: Not really, I can't really think off the top of my head, moving	
123	towards academy status. No not really, not that I can think of, that would be	
124	of importance in my mind.	
125		
126	Interviewer: That's fine and what about any mavericks? Can you think of	
127	anyone that deviates from the norm? Does things that are not quite expected,	
128	that can be both positive and negative.	
129		
130	Senior Leader C: Within the staff group?	
131		
132	Interviewer: Yes.	
133		
134	Senior Leader C: I think so. I think in low level ways perhaps, there is no one	
135	that's perhaps dead obvious.	
136		
137	Interviewer: So do you think there's no real mavericks in this organisation or	
138	past tense have there been and there is no longer?	
139		
140	Senior Leader C: In different ways positive and negative, is that what you	
141	mean?	
142		
143	Interviewer: Yes.	
144		
145	Senior Leader C: I suppose so, so perhaps the old Deputy Head would have	
146	been what I'd class as a maverick for particular reasons of improving results.	
147		
148	Interviewer: Craig Jones?	
149		

Line	Transcript	Notes
150	Senior Leader C: Yes, doing it his way and he was here knowing that it was	
151	going to become academy.	
152		
153	Interviewer: So how do you think he was a maverick, if you were going to	
154	describe his particular attributes?	
155		
156	Senior Leader C: So attributes, that would be doing things that perhaps	
157	slightly different to ensure results improved. So you know getting students in	
158	at the weekend that came from him originally. Bringing children in, so	
159	collecting them ready for exams. So to make sure that results were	
160	sustainable, on the up. I suppose doing this collapsing of timetable to begin	
161	with for core subjects, which I know irritated other members of staff in the	
162	school which worked in different departments. But deciding that English and	
163	Maths, then later on Science were key. You remember he used to do those	
164	days that were collapsed.	
165		
166	Interviewer: Yeah.	
167		
168	Senior Leader C: So in that way people might call him a maverick, but almost	
169	like doing what has to be done to get them their five GCSEs, including English	
170	and Maths.	
171		
172	Interviewer: So do you think he was a maverick because he brought in a lot of	
173	change?	
174		
175	Senior Leader C: Yeah and he was willing to... not ride rough shot, but he was	
176	willing. He could see the ultimate goal even if staff didn't and you know, he	
177	would ensure that we went there regardless of what others thought.	
178		
179	Interviewer: So would there be anything else about his personality that would	
180	make him a maverick or just that he initiated a lot of change?	
181		
182	Senior Leader C: I think initiating a lot of change and perhaps doing it without	
183	consultation with perhaps staff under the old regime were used to a bit more.	
184		
185	Interviewer: Ok, so he would initiate these drives without much discussion	
186	with staff.	
187		
188	Senior Leader C: Yeah but give him his credit he would explain the rationale	
189	which I don't think happens now, necessarily.	
190		
191	Interviewer: So how is it different now?	
192		
193	Senior Leader C: So now it still occurs, where things just happen without	
194	consultation that the rationale isn't always explained to staff, the staff body.	
195		
196	Interviewer: Why do you think that is?	
197		
198	Senior Leader C: (pause 5 secs) Um... I think that could be for a range of	
199	reasons. Do I know the answer? No. It could be because, because it doesn't	

Line	Transcript	Notes
200	really matter what staff think because it's happening anyway and if you don't	
201	get on board you can get out. Whereas I think under the old Deputy Head he	
202	was still quite keen, for all his bluster, to get people on board and buy in. I	
203	don't feel that as much now.	
204		
205	Interviewer: Is there anything else you like to mention in terms of stories?	
206		
207	Senior Leader C: Not that I can think of. I can't think of any stories, if you give	
208	me some examples?	
209		
210	Interviewer: I don't want to lead you.	
211		
212	Senior Leader C: I just can't think of any.	
213		
214	Interviewer: No that's fine. You've covered many elements I've heard before.	
215	So all it is, is anything that comes to mind, any stories that come to mind	
216	when you think of the Academy. For some people it's quite trivial, for other	
217	it's quite big. So you've given me some examples. Anything else?	
218		
219	Senior Leader C: I suppose you've just reminded me that I'm pleased it was	
220	the sponsor that took us over at the end day because they have dealt in	
221	education. We did have members of staff, who although were going, said it	
222	could have quite easily been a pet store that was out sponsor or an	
223	organisation that didn't, weren't necessarily involved in education. So I think	
224	the sponsors, in the long run, as the years have gone, it's probably been quite	
225	a positive thing in many ways. Probably could be more positive.	
226		
227	Interviewer: How so?	
228		
229	Senior Leader C: You know the wider work with different sponsor	
230	organisations, but that seems quite difficult to unpick. I think each school has	
231	their own agenda there's lots of conflicts between the different schools. Each	
232	individual school on its own very accommodating, but to work as a body that	
233	is difficult.	
234		
235	Interviewer: I'm going to move onto symbol. So what are the key symbolic	
236	aspects which represent the nature Academy? So I'm going to give you some	
237	examples: logos, offices, cars, titles, language and terminology. Is there	
238	anything that you think of those, symbolic elements around and in the	
239	Academy which really represents its nature?	
240		
241	Senior Leader C: The logo definitely, the colour red for some reason. You	
242	know when you're driving into work and you see the bags on the students'	
243	backs.	
244		
245	Interviewer: What do you think it symbolises that red?	
246		
247	Senior Leader C: Being different I suppose, definitely. Um... I don't know, the	
248	idea that it's not being a dangerous place, that's not the right word I'm	
249	looking for. But just the idea it somewhere, that's there's is a lot happening,	

Line	Transcript	Notes
240	it's busy, not fiery, but there is a lot of energy. That doesn't necessarily mean	
251	it's positive. There's a lot there's a lot going on, I suppose. I don't really like	
252	the typography of the symbol.	
253		
254	Interviewer: Why not?	
255		
256	Senior Leader C: I don't know, does it remind you of that Lemony Snicket's	
257	book. I can't even think now what it's called. It's got that kind of writing and	
258	it's quite spidery. I don't know. It reminds me, not Harry Potterish, but it's	
259	that kind of feeling, but obviously when you get into the institute that's	
260	slightly different.	
261		
262	Interviewer: What's the nature of those books?	
263		
264	Senior Leader C: They're fantasy aren't they, they're fantasy books.	
265		
266	Interviewer: So do you feel it feels a little bit fantasy like, the typography?	
267		
268	Senior Leader C: Yeah the choice of typography is quite interesting I thought. I	
269	can't think what it is, but it's quite spidery I think.	
270		
271	Interviewer: Do you think it represents our nature in anyway?	
272		
273	Senior Leader C: I don't think it represents our students.	
274		
275	Interviewer: And what about the staff?	
276		
277	Senior Leader C: Not really I don't think.	
278		
279	Interviewer: Ok, anything in terms of titles that stands out and represents the	
280	nature of the Academy, or language or technology?	
281		
282	Senior Leader C: I suppose the motto which is very large on the on the school	
283	mal, as you come in. What's it stand for, the Latin? Isn't it something to go	
284	forth.	
285		
286	Interviewer: I can't remember.	
287		
288	Senior Leader C: That stands out with the four colours for the houses. The	Senior Leader C points to a school poster with the school logo on it.
289	badge thing, that stands out. There's the school thing on there, at the top of	
290	that poster there. Do you know what I mean in terms of being slightly spidery,	
291	it's an unusual typography for a school, I thought. Then you've got the main	
292	sponsor's badge.	
293		
294	Interviewer: It seems almost like the devil's horns.	
295		
296	Senior Leader C: Yeah it seems quite fantasy. I can't put my figure on it.	
297		
298	Interviewer: I wonder when people look at that they think what it represents	
299	about our Academy?	

Line	Transcript	Notes
300		
301	Senior Leader C: It doesn't come across as strong, does it? I don't know and I	
302	think the building itself is quite imposing from the outside.	
303		
304	Interviewer: So what do you think that symbolises about the Academy?	
305		
306	Senior Leader C: That it's trying to make a mark I suppose really, within the	
307	community, within the environment perhaps.	
308		
309	Interviewer: What type of mark is it trying to make?	
310		
311	Senior Leader C: That it's almost like 'I'm here'. It's quite a strange building in	
312	a way, but it does stand as you come down. Particularly from the street	
313	because you're coming downhill aren't you? It's quite big and the school logo	
314	you can see that quite far.	
315		
316	Interviewer: So what about building or potentially offices. Is there anything	
317	that stands out in terms of offices, it could be location, size, that represents	
318	the nature of the Academy at all?	
319		
320	Senior Leader C: I suppose you could argue it's quite inward looking because	
321	there's a lot of buildings, a lot of rooms rather, which don't have any outside	
322	lighting or windows in. Is that spacing thing? I don't know but I found that	
323	pretty strange. I'm trying to think of other buildings I've been to where that's	
324	the case and I can't. You know like new buildings, like hospitals and those kind	
325	of things. What was the rationale for the inward looking rooms?	
326		
327	Interviewer: Do you think it's quite business orientated?	
328		
329	Senior Leader C: Yeah, quite business orientated, what the concept of privacy	
330	maybe, as well. You know because there's blinds everywhere as well, in the	
331	old building you'd have your class but there was nothing to cover it.	
332		
333	Interviewer: Anything about location of offices or classrooms, that symbolise	
334	importance?	
335		
336	Senior Leader C: Well I suppose as you come in now in to the main reception,	
337	you've got the key people down on that the corridor I should imagine. That's	
338	how it would be perceived. Whereas in the old building, although they were	
339	at the front, you had that partition didn't you? Where reception used to sit	
340	with that door that was locked. It's far more open or so it feels. I was surprise	
341	that Nigel was happy for the children to trot down his corridor if you like, in a	Principal's name altered to protect anonymity.
342	regular basis to go to breaks, lessons, lunch. You know that he would position	
343	himself there. Does that make sense because it is quite noisy and it can get	
344	quite congested?	
345		
346	Interviewer: Yeah. So do you think staff perceive that if you have an office in	
347	this area you of greater importance?	
348		
349	Senior Leader C: Your sort of at the hub perhaps.	

Line	Transcript	Notes
350		
351	Interviewer: The hub of activity for the Academy?	
352		
353	Senior Leader C: Yes. On the admin side particularly with Margaret, Verity,	Names altered to protect anonymity.
354	Danny and Nigel being down there I think. You know I was surprised that	
355	Francis is over there on the other end.	
356		
357	Interviewer: Do you think that symbolises anything?	
358		
359	Senior Leader C: Ha ha. I was surprised she wasn't closer to the hub. It would	
360	seem more appropriate to put her in the office where the care takers are and	
361	they could have hers.	
362		
363	Interviewers: Anything in terms of cars that stands out.	
364		
365	Senior Leader C: Cars?	
366		
367	Interviewer: There may or may not be.	
368		
369	Senior Leader C: No.	
370		
371	Interviewer: ok anything else in terms of symbolic aspects which stand out and	
372	may represent the nature of the Academy?	
373		
374	Senior Leader C: I think the ethos of the building does represent you know the	
375	ethos of what we're trying to achieve from the from above. Which is like quite	
376	business like and an office environment and everyone getting down to their	
377	work and doing what they have to do to succeed. I think it's that kind of	
378	feeling rather than being all warm and more open plan if that makes sense?	
379		
380	Interviewer: Do you think that's different to the old build?	
381		
382	Senior Leader C: I don't think the old build was more open plan, but for some	
383	reason I have more of a warm ethos around it, I would say.	
384		
385	Interviewer: Why do you think that was?	
386		
387	Senior Leader C: I don't know, it's hard to pinpoint. I remember when I came	
388	to interview to this school. I picked up on it straight away and was quite	
389	positive about coming to this school because of that. That was under the old	
390	regime and children were perhaps much more difficult. But you just had a	
391	feeling of warmth in the old building, that's what I had anyway. I think from	
392	doing tours of different stakeholders. You know from training teachers, to	
393	NQTs, all the way up to people going for senior roles. When you gave them	NQTs – Newly Qualified Teachers
394	tours and guides, you always got a positive vibe from their feedback about the	
395	nature of the building. I haven't done it here actually.	
396		
397	Interviewer: It would be interesting to see if that came across still?	
398		
399	Senior Leader C: But definitely there and they were quite enthusiastic about	

Line	Transcript	Notes
400	coming to work there. That was the feedback always, I don't think, you know	
401	it was quite genuine.	
402		
403	Interviewer: Looking at power structures. What core assumptions and	
404	beliefs about what is important at the Academy is help by the senior	
405	leadership team. So if you were to ask the senior leadership team, what do	
406	you think they would say about the core beliefs and assumptions of this	
407	Academy?	
408		
409	Senior Leader C: I think the core beliefs would be that everyone can succeed	
410	and you must try your utmost to make sure you do. There's lots of systems	
411	and things in place to help you achieve that. Be they after school revision	
412	classes, collapsed timetables or even when we go to the Saturday revision	
413	sessions. So the expectation is you'll succeed and they're things in place to	
414	help you reach that goal, but you must aspire to that goal and nothing should	
415	stop you i.e. behaviour or attendance etc. Probably the same for staff.	
416		
417	Interviewer: So if you were to ask the senior leadership team, what's the core	
418	belief, what do we want to achieve with this Academy, what does it stand for?	
419	It would be everyone can succeed?	
420		
421	Senior Leader C: I think so, that's how it feels, particularly on the academic	Craig – the old Deputy Head.
422	side. That's probably more important than on a creative or pastoral side,	
423	that's how it feels.	
424		
425	Interviewer: Do you think there's anything that else that goes with that? If you	
426	look at the strategy of the organisation, would the senior leadership know	
427	that and say 'this is where we're going and this is what we're going to do'? s	
428		
429	Senior Leader C: I don't know if they would necessarily, some might and	
430	others wouldn't.	
431		
432	Interviewer: Why do you think that would be?	
433		
434	Senior Leader C: I think it's just because of the communication. The senior	
435	leadership team's quite big and it's disparate because everyone's got their	
436	own particular area that their concerned with and... yeah. It is disparate	
437	perhaps, so everyone's got their own agenda and I think that coming together	
438	and sharing the vision, apart from the fact that everyone needs to try and	
439	succeed.	
440		
441	Interviewer: Has it always been so disparate and so big?	
442		
443	Senior Leader C: There was always more time for the senior staff, the senior	
444	leaders to get together as a body and discuss things and that was regular. That	
445	used to be every once a week and everyone had to attend. Yeah but you	
446	definitely used to be able say point and speak your mind and you had that	
447	forum in the old school. And we'd be there sometime half six, seven under	
448	Craig but that was where we thrashed things out and you could speak your	
449	mind. If he did you might be shot down in flames by him, but you could say	

Line	Transcript	Notes
450	your peace and things could be discussed and debated.	
451		
452	Interviewer: And you feel that's maybe less so now?	
453		
454	Senior Leader: Yeah, it seems like a more information giving session than a	
455	strategy meeting.	
456		
457	Interviewer: And when a senior leadership team is smaller?	
458		
459	Senior Leader C: I think there is a little bit more continuity because you work	
460	in smaller group. It was easier for you know messages to be taken on board. I	
461	think when you got to be a big group, as I say, you're pulled in different	
462	directions and you have different rationales for what you're doing.	
463		
464	Interviewer: Anything else in terms of core beliefs of the senior leadership	
465	team?	
466		
467	Senior Leader C: Not really no, I think the one thing that we would perhaps all	
468	agree on is that the Academy is geared up to make sure that every child can	
469	succeed, meet their potential, skewered to the academic side maybe.	
470		
471	Interviewer: But we wouldn't quite be sure where each is going?	
472		
473	Senior Leader C: No I don't think we would.	
474		
475	Interviewer: Looking at the organisational structures, what does the formal	
476	staffing structure or the informal ways in which staff work at the Academy	
477	reflect back following: power structures, what is important and important	
478	relationships? So if we are going to look at the formal staffing structure	
479	first, the hierarchy. What does that suggest about whether power structures	
480	are?	
481		
482	Senior Leader C: Yeah, the power structures are at the top, that's quite clear	
483	and then things are filtered down to say the Principal and the Vice Principal.	
484	Then things filter down to the AVPs, perhaps not always, circumnavigated to	AVP – Assistant Vice
485	other members of staff like Heads of House, Heads of Department. Definitely,	Principal.
486	you know, you've got your tree haven't yeah? That's definite, on a formal	
487	level.	
488		
489	Interviewer: So at a formal level we've got the Principal and then the Vice	
490	Principal and that's where the key power is and then it's disseminated, either	
491	to senior leaders or other staff members.	
492		
493	Senior Leader C: Or on a need to know basis.	
494		
495	Interviewer: Why might that be on a need to know basis?	
496		
497	Senior Leader C: Because that's how they like to operates perhaps.	
498		
499	Interviewer: Who's they?	

Line	Transcript	Notes
500		
501	Senior Leader C: Well, the Vice Principal I suppose. That's how she operates.	
502	That's how I think she thinks that that's the best way to manage people.	
503		
504	Interviewer: Do you think that is?	
505		
506	Senior Leader C: In certain organisations perhaps it is. But within a school, in	
507	an ideal world, within a school education environment not necessarily.	
508	Because the qualities that we should be wanting students to adopt we don't	
509	necessarily follow do we? So the idea of being honest and being clear and	
510	keeping everyone informed so they know what's happening. We don't	
511	necessarily do that with each other? And to be caring and not bully, those	
512	kind of things you'd want children to...	
513		
514	Interviewer: I wonder why that is?	
515		
516	Senior Leader C: ...I wonder why that is. I don't know.	
517		
518	Interviewer: So it goes from the Principal to the Vice Principal and is there	
519	another Vice Principal?	
520		
521	Senior Leader C: Not as far as I'm aware.	
522		
523	Interviewer: So there's one Vice Principal?	
524		
525	Senior Leader C: Yeah.	
526		
527	Interviewer: Has that always been the case?	
528		
529	Senior Leader C: No there has obviously always been two but for the last few	
530	years there's been one.	
531		
532	Interviewer: Why is there only one now?	
533		
534	Senior Leader C: Because the Head perceives that that's all we need.	
535		
536	Interviewer: Why do you think he thinks that?	
537		
538	Senior Leader C: Because she can do everything and to have some on board	
539	equal to her is just more trouble than it's worth. Unnecessary perhaps, salary	
540	wise.	
541		
542	Interviewer: Do you think it was purely a salary based decision?	
543		
544	Senior Leader C: I think it's probably a range of things. A salary based decision.	
545	Perhaps the Vice Principal that is no longer here made the Head feel that was	
546	that, was it a valid role really.	
547		
548	Interviewer: Do you think it wasn't a valid role?	
549		

Line	Transcript	Notes
550	Senior Leader C: It was made not to be valid, I think.	
551		
552	Interviewer: How so?	
553		
554	Senior Leader C: I don't know, but just taking responsibility away and making	
555	the role smaller and smaller until it was quite significant perhaps.	
556		
557	Interviewer: Why do you think that was done?	
558		
559	Senior Leader C: Because I just don't think the other Vice Principal can share	
560	power in that way and... that's what I think. That's my thoughts and I would	
561	say that she find easy to working in isolation on her own rather than having to	
562	spend time communicating to someone of her equal to explain things.	
563		
564	Interviewer: Do you think that's an effective management method?	
565		
566	Senior Leader C: No, ultimately no, it's not really is it? Because if that person is	
567	to leave, or God forbid anything then that's like one person who has a hell of a	
568	lot knowledge and insight and that has just disappeared.	
569		
570	Interviewer: So when you spoke previously you said about Craig being here,	
571	was there another Deputy then?	
572		
573	Senior Leader C: There was there was Mark Anchor, but he was very clear.	
574	They were quite clear together that Craig was academic and that side of	
575	things, curriculum, and Mark was pastoral, behaviour.	
576		
577	Interviewer: Do you think that was an effective management method?	
578		
579	Senior Leader C: At the time, yeah I think it was at the time and the teams	
580	were very clear.	
581		
582	Interviewer: It's curious that that seems quite a logical method and that we	
583	have moved away from that?	
584		
585	Senior Leader C: We've made the pastoral less important and maybe that is	
586	where the Academy is going. That was the aim wasn't it? To make behaviour	
587	not so much of a priority, that students would know how to behave and	
588	wouldn't need so much impact and input. Saying that the result, figures don't	
589	bear that out do they? So the detentions are still quite high. And by creating	
590	that layer of Vice Principals, once the other Vice Principal had gone. So one	
591	Vice Principal but then you had that layer of Paul, Danny and Francis.	
592		
593	Interviewer: So those are the Senior Vice Principals?	
594		
595	Senior Leader C: Yes.	
596		
597	Interviewer: Do you think that's an effective method?	
598		
599	Senior Leader C: It doesn't seem to be no, from you know first impressions	

Line	Transcript	Notes
600	because everything is driven by that one person still.	
601		
602	Interviewer: In terms of looking at the staffing structure. Is there anything	
603	which says what is important, in terms of important relationships?	
604		
605	Senior Leader C: It is the academic really. That's where the drive is and	
606	results.	
607		
608	Interviewer: And looking at the informal way staff work together. So if we	
609	were to not look at the formal staffing structure but the informal ways staff	
610	work together. Can you see any power structures there, or anything that says	
611	this is important or important to the Academy?	
612		
613	Senior Leader C: I think staff to give them their due of all levels, underneath	
614	the Vice Principal, do communicate quite clearly. It doesn't take very long to	
615	find out certain things. So I think that regular teachers and above, you know	
616	they're quite keen to communicate messages and things that might be	
617	happening amongst each other. And that's, in an informal way, that's quite	
618	effective. I think we take the time to go and find particular individuals to let	
619	them know that this might be happening or that, or through emails. So you	
620	have this kind of is on a need to know basis at the top, but at the bottom staff	
621	are trying hard to make sure everyone knows what is going on.	
622		
623	Interviewer: Can you see any informal power structures?	
624		
625	Senior Leader C: ...I used to perhaps, I don't know if I do so much now.	
626	Perhaps that informal power structures with the Heads of House and Francis.	
627	That the little group of pastorals, but I think that has been taken away from	
628	them definitely, compared to what it used to be. Within the staffroom? Not	
629	really. I feel there is a reasonable amount of quality, I feel here. I don't feel	
630	that no, I do don't.	
631		
632	Interviewer: There are no informal power structures?	
633		
634	Senior Leader C: There probably are but I don't see them and the way I deal,	
635	whether with an NQT or Head of Sixth Form I will talk to you in an equal way,	
636	it doesn't matter. That's the feeling I get that people are quite comfortable to	
637	drop into classrooms or lessons to pass on messages and things.	
638		
639	Interviewer: Looking at control systems. What do the formalised control	
640	systems such as measurement and reward, monitor and therefore	
641	emphasise about what is important at the Academy? So looking at the	
642	formal control systems, which can be measuring things or rewarding things,	
643	is there anything you think emphasises what is important at the Academy?	
644		
645	Senior Leader C: I think the behaviour system is geared up to making sure that	
646	students can access learning in the classroom. That's the aim of it and that	
647	then ties in with what I was saying earlier about the academic and what	
648	you're being taught is the more important thing in the classroom. Yes I think	
649	the behaviour system supports that and makes it quite clear that we should	

Line	Transcript	Notes
650	be giving children every opportunity to access the learning and nothing should	
651	stand in the way of that. So I think that's quite an effective support system	
652	within itself, whether it's used consistently or in the correct manner is	
653	perhaps the question.	
654		
655	Interviewer: And what about rewards for students?	
656		
657	Senior Leader C: I really feel, I know we have the Vivos but they don't really	
658	excite me. I don't know. Someone's been in charge of rewards forever and	
659	it's always hard to try and pin down how to reward teenagers and to motivate	
660	them and things have been tried. A few years ago it used to be a clock and	
661	that's not really going to excite fifteen years old is it? Vivos, yeah they're not	
662	too bad but still I don't think our kids are thoroughly excited by them but	
663	what would they be excited by? I'm not too sure.	
664		
665	Interviewer: And what about the measurement of staff? Can you see anything	
666	there?	
667		
668	Senior Leader C: What do you mean the measurements of staff?	
669		
670	Interviewer: It could be measuring them through lessons, it could be through	
671	results.	
672		
673	Senior Leader C: Oh yeah, I think we're quite hot here on measuring staff in	
674	all sorts of ways. Like you say through lesson observations, through data	
675	analysis of external exams and mocks and things. I suppose they're looked at	
676	with a fine tooth comb and even the amount of detentions you've given out,	
677	that's looked at. Even if staff aren't is aware of it and how many you're giving	
678	out and things. So I think we are measured quite a lot here.	
679		
680	Interviewer: Why do you think that is?	
681		
682	Senior Leader C: It has to come back to the results are key I think and you	
683	need to be sort of on the ball really, I suppose.	
684		
685	Interviewer: And if you don't produce results what would happen then?	
686		
687	Senior Leader C: You know I'm not too sure. There would be pressure	
688	definitely, pressure on you to improve. Maybe pressures so intolerable staff	
689	might want to leave and go elsewhere.	
690		
691	Interviewer: What sort of pressure?	
692		
693	Senior Leader C: I think you know, really you know, micromanaged I think by	
694	senior staff.	
695		
696	Interviewer: And what about in terms of staff reward?	
697		
698	Senior Leader C: I don't really think staff here are rewarded, no. Compared to	
699	other schools, no I can't think that they are. But I don't think they have been	

Line	Transcript	Notes
700	under the Head, the Principal. I don't think it's his nature. Even when we had	TLR – Teaching and Learning Responsibility
701	the Ofsted and it was good. The next day I was quite surprised that nothing	
702	was laid on for staff as a thank you. So I don't think we're rewarded. Maybe	
703	you could argue actually, that actually through salary, that's enough and	
704	that's how the Principal perceives he's rewarding you, by paying you well.	
705		
706	Interviewer: So if you get better results do you get more money?	
707		
708	Senior Leader C: Not in an obvious or explicit way, but if you get better results	
709	I think they're more likely to hot house you here and bring you and put you	
710	into a position that, where you'd get more money, more TLR. If that makes	
711	sense?	
712		
713	Interviewer: Yes. You think that's the key kind of reward method here?	
714		
715	Senior Leader C: I think so but I don't know if that's necessarily healthy	
716	because you do get the impressions that it's like 'I pay you enough so do one,	
717	get on with it'.	
718		
719	Interviewer: So you are expensive, you're paid well so then you do what's told	
720	of you?	
721		
722	Senior Leader C: Yeah. So I don't think necessary, like little touches also can	
723	mean a lot which I don't think you get, perhaps get here now. Like under the	
724	old Head, he was quite good at sending you a birthday card. It so stupid but it	
725	just showed that he knew when you birthday was. He didn't make a big song	
726	and dance, it just went into your pigeon hole, but it was from him. His	
727	personal assistant would remind him of course and do it but it was that kind	
728	of a personal touch and at Christmas he always would send every individual a	
729	card with a message on, an individual message. So that's not worth much	
730	really but it made you feel a little bit more valued as an individual. That's what	
731	it was. Whereas I don't think staff are really awarded, other than perhaps	
732	though, compared to schools, you're probably paid a little bit more on the	
733	generous side.	
734		
735	Interviewer: And that compensates for that?	
736		
737	Senior Leader C: Yeah, that's how I view it and it compensates for other stuff	
738	that you have to put up with and other strains.	
739		
740	Interviewer: Looking at the routines and rituals. The first think I want to look	
741	at, it's broken down into two sections. What are the routing way that staff	
742	behave towards each other?	
743		
744	Senior Leader C: Yeah, I think staff are generally are quite courteous to each	
745	other. There's a humour. It might sometimes be born out of desperation but	
746	there is that camaraderie still, which is nice. Amongst staff, you know the	
747	main staff group. The building doesn't always lend itself well to staff	
748	gatherings. You know, to having time to sit down and eat and chat, not really.	
749	Just the layout and the rooms that are on offer aren't particularly appealing.	

Line	Transcript	Notes
750	So there's not much time for sort of getting together and people are isolated	
751	in their own little areas and I think the work rooms haven't helped either. But	
752	generally there is that, camaraderie there still I think. I think they treat each	
753	other generally with respect and good humour.	
754		
755	Interviewer: So do you think that's evident across, you know teachers, Heads	
756	of Departments and senior leaders? They all treat each other quite well?	
757		
758	Senior Leader C: Across all departments and some senior leaders but not all.	
759		
760	Interviewer: So that's quite interesting, so most teachers treat each other	
761	with respect and humility but when you get to the Senior Leadership Team.	
762		
763	Senior Leader C: Then there is a disparity.	
764		
765	Interviewer: Why do you think that is?	
766		
767	Senior Leader C: I just think its personality really and sort of courtesy may be	
768	and just understanding about respect. I don't know... Most people I walk past	
769	always say 'good morning' to me and I say 'good morning' back or whatever it	
770	might be. But there will be some senior leaders that just walk past and ignore	
771	you.	
772		
773	Interviewer: Can you see any patterns in those that might do that?	
774		
775	Senior Leader C: What do you mean patterns?	
776		
777	Interviewer: So if there is a select group of Senior Leaders that do that, can	
778	you see any common threads between them which might explain why those	
779	do and others don't? It could be to do with your relationship with them or it	
780	could be other factors such as their a role and position?	
781		
782	Senior Leader C: It could be their role and position and it could be my	
783	relationship with them I suppose, I hadn't thought about that. Maybe role and	
784	position, perhaps is that they're just a bit preoccupied and busy. There's	
785	always something important to be doing as they more around the Academy.	
786		
787	Interviewer: What to do the rituals of Academy life such as training programs,	
788	promotion and assessment point to what is important? So if you look at	
789	training programs, promotion, assessment, what does that say about what is	
790	important?	
791		
792	Senior Leader C: Well the training is trying to make sure that you are more	
793	than reasonably skilled in the classroom, trying to plug gaps in skill shortages,	
794	perhaps of staff, so the training days.	
795		
796	Interviewer: Do you feel like you've had adequate training?	
797		
798	Senior Leader C: Probably not here, no. Other training I've had in the past has	
799	stand me in good instead. No. I think on the surface level it's trying to ensure	

Line	Transcript	Notes
800	staff have got adequate training and again it's to make sure. I think the drive	
801	is to make you the best possible classroom practitioner you can be. A lot of its	
802	based there. But is it effective? Well I don't know and has it helped? I'm not	
803	sure.	
804		
805	Interviewer: What about in terms of promotion. So looking at promotion, can	
806	you see any patterns there?	
807		
808	Senior Leader C: Yeah, I think internally. Internal promotion is possible if	
809	you're perceived as being someone that's going to be helpful to the overall	
810	picture that the Vice Principal and Principal perceive internally.	
811		
812	Interviewer: So promotions are based purely on their opinion?	
813		
814	Senior Leader C: I think so, yes.	
815		
816	Interviewer: Do you think that's a fair method?	
817		
818	Senior Leader C: No, because I think the people that are being attracted to	
819	those roles are those sort of people that just agreed and not to question. And	
820	you always have to have someone on a senior team. I think it's the people	
821	that disagree or make you question things, can be quite creative and bring,	
822	bring out issues that no one has seen or drawbacks to particular things. So my	
823	perception would be, currently anyway, that promotions is based on like	
824	more than perhaps ability.	
825		
826	Interviewer: And what about in terms of assessment?	
827		
828	Senior Leader C: What do you mean?	
829		
830	Interviewer: So looking at the assessment either students or teachers,	
831	anything that stands out?	
832		
833	Senior Leader C: I think it's quite relentless here isn't it? The assessment, you	
834	know on the cycle of mocks or grade input and predicted grade and	
835	comments and things. And the two weekly marking cycle and then you've got	
836	the book trawl. So I think assessment is definitely high priority and it's quite	
837	relentless of and making sure we measure the students constantly.	
838		
839	Interviewer: As well as the staff or just the students?	
840		
841	Senior Leader C: Assessment of the staff. I think assessment of staff, I think	
842	you get under the radar if they perceive that you're is fine and everything's	
843	going well or you're particularly liked. If any issues occur then perhaps you're	
844	brought more onto the radar and pressure can be put upon you, maybe. If	
845	that makes sense?	
846		
847	Interviewer: Yes it does.	
848		
849	Senior Leader C: Assessment of staff. Other than the diagnostics and things.	

Line	Transcript	Notes
850	Although I wonder about the benefits of that.	
851		
852	Interviewer: Is that the lesson observations?	
853		
854	Senior Leader C: Yeah, because I had mine yesterday and you know the	
855	person that saw me said 'there's nothing wrong'. So I'll end up going to some	
856	kind of you know training on whatever.	
857		
858	Interviewer: Did you find it beneficial?	
859		
860	Senior Leader C: I think I found it beneficial in sense that I haven't been	
861	observed for some time and it quite nice for a specialist to come and, and	
862	with the new curriculum, with the new spec that we delivering in to say 'yeah	
863	this is exactly what s you should be doing and everything is sorted and on the	
864	ball'. So that was nice, just to know I'm going down the right track; that was	
865	helpful. What comes out of it and what teacher training I get is another	
866	matter.	
867		
868	Interviewer: Okay, so we've covered stories, symbols, power structures,	
869	organisational structures, control systems and rituals and routines. Taking	
870	all these together and looking at all these various elements, what do you	
871	think are the set of assumptions, or the kind of key cultures of the Academy.	
872	So if you were going to explain someone this is the organisation, this is what	
873	the Academy stands for, what things would come to mind?	
874		
875	Senior Leader C: I think the message is that the Principal, in particular would	
876	want, that children that come here are safe and I think actually he's is quite	
877	right on that. There is a safe environment in this school, compared to others.	
878	So they will be safe and they're well cared for on a pastoral level. I think all	
879	members staff on a whole, we'd never walk past a child that was crying, if	
880	they were ill. Someone would stop and help. So I think the message would be	
881	that your children here, that it's a safe environment and generally they're	
882	cared for. There are people to pick up issues that perhaps others schools	
883	would ignore or just expect them to get on with. So for example if someone	
884	has lost their lunch money, in others schools that's just tough and you have to	
885	go without until you get home. Whereas here we make provision to make	
886	sure, so we definitely, there's that. And safe and secure environment for	
887	students and the second thing would be that if your child comes this Academy	
888	that they will be given every opportunity to succeed, within their subjects,	
889	and they will be supported along the way. I think they would be the two key	
890	things really.	
891		
892	Interviewer: And if a staff member came to apply here and you were saying	
893	this is what our culture is. What would you say to them?	
894		
895	Senior Leader C: For the students yes, yes. For the staff I think it is different. I	
896	think I'd have a question mark there, you know, on whether I'd advise,	
897	whether I'd recommend working here.	
898		
899	Interviewer: Why do you think that would be?	

Line	Transcript	Notes
900		
901	Senior Leader C: I just feel that (pause, 5 secs) there are a lot of demands on	
902	you and it can go two ways can't it? And if you rise to the challenge and if	
903	everything's going along quite smoothly and there is not a particular issue,	
904	then you'll be fine but if you hit any stumbling blocks and then there could be	
905	problems. And then you might regret the day you took your appointment	
906	here, you could. I know it has happened for some people. I know there is a lot	
907	of expectation on you doing long days and you know, working, you know	
908	quite hard enough and if you're not necessarily up for that, particularly if	
909	you've come from another school, it can be quite a shock.	
910		
911	Interviewer: Do you think people fit in better, if they're perhaps NQTs and	
912	they haven't had much experience of other schools?	
913		
914	Senior Leader C: Yeah and then they've got nothing to draw on and to	
915	compare I suppose, yeah. There are a lot of NQT's this year. Nearly a fifth of	
916	the staff group.	
917		
918	Interviewer: And do we tend to kept most of our NQTs?	
919		
920	Senior Leader C: Historically I think we did. But I think there was a lot of	
921	attrition last year wasn't there?	
922		
923	Interviewer: Why do you think that was?	
924		
925	Senior Leader C: How many went. Four or five?	
926		
927	Interviewer: I think it was five.	
928		
929	Senior Leader: Why? I don't know what happened to be fair. Maybe it was	
930	the new building, maybe it was the move across and that confusion I heard	
931	happened at the beginning of the year here. That was obviously the beginning	
932	of their NQT year and that's quite an unsettling period and you're trying to get	
933	your head round, you're groups and paperwork etc. I think there was lots of	
934	computers down and phones not working and all sorts. Perhaps it wasn't a	
935	very smooth start for them. I can't believe subject mentors wouldn't have	
936	supported them. I don't know. I would be quite embarrassed if I was	
937	responsible for them and five went under my watch. But then again that	
937	doesn't matter because the person responsible for it is held in high esteem.	
939	But then if it was someone else they could be hauled over the coals for that.	
940		
941	Interviewer: that reiterates to your previous comments doesn't it? Anything	
942	else you'd like to mention in terms of the organisational culture of the	
943	Academy?	
944		
945	Senior Leader C: I think that's about it really. Sometimes it's hard to pin down	
946	the culture of the Academy really. I think it is difficult. Is that alright?	
947		
948	Interviewer: That's brilliant, thank you.	

Appendix 9

Negotiationg Access Form

My name is Jonathan Morris. I am conducting research on a project entitled: What is the 'cultural web' of the Academy? The project is part of my Education Doctorate, which I am completing at the University of Birmingham. I am directing the project and can be contacted at the following, should you have any questions:

I am contacting you as the gatekeeper of your organisation, in that you have the authority to give me permission to conduct my research at your Academy.

My study is designed to assess the organisational culture of your academy. This will be achieved using the cultural web model as developed by Johnson and Scholes (1999). The model will be employed so that feedback can be provided on the Academy's current state and targets can be recommended for whole school improvement. The methods employed will be interviews of the Senior Leadership Team, including one member whose position is non-teaching. Focus groups for staff with some management responsibility, this includes the Heads of Department (HoD), Pastoral Managers, Exams Officer/ Data Manager, Reprographics Manager and Network Manager. Finally, the last method will be questionnaires for staff with no management or senior leadership responsibility.

The staff identified above will be asked for consent to take part in the project and I have provided you with example copies of the consent forms for the focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. While there are financial incentives for participations, a prize draw of a £50.00 voucher for both the interviews and focus groups and a £25.00 voucher for the questionnaire, I would like to emphasise that their participation is entirely voluntary. All recordings and returns will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researchers. They will however be used in the research, but under no circumstances will their name or any identifying characteristics be included. Similarly, while some contextual information on the Academy will be provided in the research, under no circumstances will the Academy name or any identifying characteristics be used.

You now have the opportunity to discuss what has been outlined above or any questions you may have about this research.

In addressing any questions or queries you might have, do you have any modifications you would like to make to this research or its methods? If yes please list them below:

Please sign the form to show that:

- you have read the comments outlined above;
- you have the authority to grant permission for the research to be conducted at your organisation;
- you have received the example consent forms for the focus groups, questionnaires and interviews;
- you have had the opportunity to discuss what is outlined above and all your questions about the research have been answered;
- you agree for the research to be conducted at your organisation.

_____ (signed)

_____ (printed)

(Researcher to keep signed copy and leave unsigned copy with respondent)

Appendix 10

Data Reduction Process

1. Read all your data.
2. Make two copies – RAW data and working data.
3. Read through the working data and highlight parts you consider important.
4. Make a list of temporary constructs (recurring ideas or subjects) from the parts you have underlined.
5. Read through the working data using the list of temporary constructs and mark the page reference where the temporary construct is evidenced.
6. Eliminate the temporary constructs which have not been reinforced in the rest of the data and note counter examples (in opposition to a temporary construct) in a different colour.
7. Come up with a list of second-order constructs which seem to be a good match to the data.
8. Examine the second-order constructs, refine where necessary and then label as your themes.
9. Review the themes and note any connections, contradictions, or paradoxes.
10. Find ways of mapping the themes.
11. Select appropriate quotations which illustrate the themes.

(Based on Thomas, 2009, p.199)

Appendix 11 – Academy improvement targets for specific case study

Organisational Issues	Recommendation for Improvement
STORIES	
The leadership has been modified from being centred upon staff satisfaction to now being very student orientated. Effective Academy leadership should focus on both students and staff.	Academy leadership should be modified so that there is a more even shift towards the needs of both students and staff. One example of engaging staff may be to re-initiate some of the staff reward schemes which were lost in the change of leadership.
There is a perceived negative correlation upon the SLT's leadership of the SMR they supervised, which was deemed to be inconsistent and unresponsive. This may be due to the SLT lacking a shared vision which has not been adequately conveyed and agreed by the Principal.	The Principal should spend time developing an agreed and shared vision with the leadership team so that their decision making has an agreed strategic trajectory. It would also be advisable that the Principal's vision is linked to the values they have for the ideal Academy, they wish to aspire to.
Staff at the Academy are much more conformist when compared to pre-academisation and the personality types that may have existed before. The stressor of conformity is a factor which can make teaching arduous and overwhelming. It may therefore be a negative factor in teacher retention and Academy performance.	Steps should be taken to reduce the expectations of conformity so that minority and alternate views may be considered. This could be achieved by the leadership team explicitly asking for minority responses and rewarding them with verbal praise, where warranted. Alternatively the Academy could seek to encourage more staff creativity, rather than conformity.
Non-teaching SMR concluded they would not be appointed in their current roles following academisation. This may adversely affect the perception of their value and worth to the organisation.	A programme of tailored training should be initiated for non-teaching staff in an effort to boost their skills and competency. This may in turn increase their value to the organisation and their corresponding feelings of worth.
Increased conformity at the Academy may also be a contributing factor in morale, which was perceived as being low. A key concern related to the worry of being punished, with reprimands ranging from being told off following meetings, to being threatened with redundancy or poor timetables.	The Academy management method should be modified so that there is a more even distribution of both negative and positive reinforcement to staff. Examples of positive reinforcement might include verbal praise, or written letters from the Principal praising staff for good attendance or performance.
Reduction in socialisation at the Academy was reported and this is considered an important part of a school's culture and helps develop cohesive relations.	Regular time should be made to encourage staff socialisation. Examples could include staff social events each term, time reserved on training days for team building activities and training given to the SLT on how to build effective and trusting relationships with the SMR.

SYMBOLS

The Principal and some other members of the SLT have more modest cars which may help reduce external status barriers between management and subordinates. However this is juxtaposed with other members of the SLT who have more luxurious cars.	Owning a modest car is advised to other members of the SLT when making future purchases. Although it is recognised that advising the SLT on car choice is potentially quite a contentious issue and this would be a suggestion only.
Both parking position and time of arrival/departure at the Academy can be utilised to identify the working hours of staff and consequently who might be working the longest. This could be utilised as an unfair method to identify which staff to reward for their hard work, such as with promotion. Also the emphasis on staff arrival/departure might also encourage staff to work long hours which is a factor that can negatively affect physical and mental health.	Flexible working hours should be trialled to allow employees to work from home. This would also make it more difficult to identify which staff work the longest hours and reduce the prominence of one's work hours being linked to their value and worth to the organisation, as all stakeholders would be able to take advantage of this scheme. One example might be to allow teachers that do not have classes first period in the morning to arrive late, and adjust their working day accordingly.
The front offices are associated with more internal power at the Academy and are a status symbol of an employee's value and worth. This might leave staff with the perception that the further you are from the front offices the lower your value to the Academy.	The four most senior member of SLT with offices at the front of the Academy should be repositioned, so that they are located around the Academy and where possible near the SMR they supervise. This may help improve productivity by encouraging greater informal contact with the SLT. It may also improve other staff's perception of their value to the Academy, by eradicating the association of the most important staff having offices at the front of the building.
The Academy does not have a culture of celebrating promotions and success and the lack of transparency in regard to titles may be actively damaging the value that staff feel at the Academy, as well as making it unclear who staff should report to for tasks and issues.	Promotions should be celebrated at the Academy and announced to all staff, for instance in morning briefing or staff meetings.
Criticism was expressed about the branding 'facades' created at the Academy which contrasts with what the school is really like. This is supported by the fact the rebranding was identified as confusing parents who assumed the Academy was a grammar school like other schools of the main sponsor.	This branding might help boost student recruitment with more able students attending the Academy. It is therefore a recommendation that the promotion of the Academy sponsor should continue and where possible be emphasised.
Issues with the build were expressed in relation to potential health problems which may be observed due to the lack of light and poor air circulation.	It is important that staff at the Academy receive regular access to daylight during the day. One option would be to assign staff an outside duty each day, for instance a lunch time duty in the playground or a bus duty. This may also help develop student and teacher relationships as staff learn about students from their social groups. Alternatively, given teacher time is at a premium, staff could be given a space to eat their lunch outside, weather permitting.

Some staff perceived communication in the Academy to be more corporate, such as more guarded language which was much more formal and businesslike. This included some of the staff who perceived communication as being negative from the SLT.	Informal communication allows subordinates to feel more comfortable in expressing their opinion which can lead to a greater chance of innovation. It is therefore a recommendation that the Academy attempts to reduce its corporate language and increase its informal communication. This might be achieved by the SLT making an effort to know those that they line manage.
Additional issues were also noted by both the SLT and the SNR in the utilisation of emails which were deemed to be excessive and persistent.	Academy policy should be to encourage more face to face conversations. Alternatively an embargo could take place on emails from 6pm to 8am and also be included in the Academy's email acceptable use policy.
POWER STRUCTURES	
The SLT was noted as being too large and divisive and consequently power constraints exist. However reducing the size of the SLT was considered pointless, since the decisions are made by three or four people on the SLT and so, unless you are part of that group, the division and issues would still remain.	Decision making on the SLT should be based upon democratic consensus with a majority vote needed in order for decisions to be made.
The leadership style was identified as being autocratic and decision making was deemed to rest with the Vice Principal. However this was suggested to create further issues with tension and additional power constraints. The autocratic leadership was also perceived as eroding the power of other members of the SLT.	Tasks should be assigned to a SLT member and a working party of Academy stakeholders, selected based upon expertise, formed for task delivery. This would enable a greater range of Academy staff to be involved in decision making and task expertise development. However it would also be important for the assigned member of the SLT to effectively manage the selection and dynamics of the team, in order for the task delivery to be successful.
The paramount focus on progress and results might not always be in the best interest of the students.	Given the pressure on schools with league tables, the focus on student academic success is considered necessary and should continue. However a policy of internal discussion should take place on the cost to benefit ratio of the promotion of academic initiatives, evaluating their impact and value to students.
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES	
The Vice Principal was noted as having totalitarian control and this was argued to be at such a point where staff were unsure if the Principal really knows what happens at the Academy, whilst others experienced instances of the Vice Principal abusing her absolute power.	One solution might be for the Vice Principal to receive senior management training which focuses on encouraging more distributed leadership. Another solution would be to employ an additional Vice Principal with a clear list of role and responsibilities, which are transferred from the current Vice Principal.

Power was agreed to be shared across the senior team and to be quite hierarchical in structure. This was noted to cause issues with the staffing structure being too top heavy and this ultimately meant staff lower down perceived they did not have a say in Academy strategy.	Working parties should be created at the department level which are based upon ad-hoc priorities identified in the subject area, for instance in department meetings. The findings should be reported back to the department and the SLT line manager. For smaller departments working groups may need to be cross-curricular and run across two or more subjects. Whilst another simple method of collegiality would be for leaders to actively seek the views of subordinates. For instance, the SLT and the SMR annually meet with those they manage in order to obtain their views on Academy or department strategy.
Bureaucracy at the Academy was noted as slowing any potential informal opportunities.	It is therefore considered that the previous sections recommendations of working groups to increase collegiality should help in reducing bureaucracy. Since this model encompasses informal work between staff and has less emphasis on bureaucratic tasks.
Internal politics were considered to be having a detrimental effect on some departments and this was impacting staffs' willingness to work informally. One explanation for these politics was the change in staff type and the resentment this might cause to longer serving staff, since new staff were deemed as having higher qualifications or thrust into teaching positions without the necessary experience (such as in Teach First).	The previously identified recommendation, of regular time being made to encourage staff socialisation, should help address some breakdown in staff relationships and promote informal work.
Lack of teacher time and reward was identified as additional barriers for informal work.	Staff training time, and one hour a week on teachers' timetable, should be reserved for the pursuit of informal work. Upon completion of the informal work, a staff reward could then be given to those initiatives that are nominated by their manager as having a positive effect upon the Academy.
CONTROL SYSTEMS	
There are issues with the performance management data because it does not take into account factors such as pupil background, pupil personal characteristics and the cultural and organisational contexts of teaching.	A formalised list of contextual issues should be created, which are acknowledged when reviewing a teacher's performance, and shared with staff.
The process of lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny were noted as being used to assess staff. However this was perceived as inconsequential since the ultimate priority is results.	A number of equally weighted methods should be used to officially assess teachers at the Academy and not just their class results. Although this is not to suggest that teachers should be overly assessed utilising an abundance of different methods, which can be too top-down and alienate teachers. It is therefore recommended that a triangulation of three or four different methods are used e.g. class progress results, lesson observation, work scrutiny and teacher interviews.

Non-teaching staff were identified as having no objective performance measure. Yet, performance appraisal is a crucial activity for improving the performance of staff and conversely it can also be used as a tool to make staff that are not performing more accountable. However with pressures on school budgets, the addition of performance management for non-teaching staff and the potential pay rises, could be a serious financial issue.	Performance management should be introduced for non-teaching staff at the Academy. However in recognition of the pressure on school budgets, it is recommended that this is phased in over a number of years. For instance beginning with those staff that are longest serving.
Issues were noted with the reward systems, which require significant financial investment, not being reviewed for their success.	The reward systems should be reviewed for efficacy, perhaps by gaining feedback from both students and teachers.
Other potential reward discussed was award evenings and assemblies. Yet the Vice Principal decides which students receive awards from subject areas. This causes issues with the power of a reward, which comes from the ones that are distributing it and the perception of those receiving it.	The subject rewards should be decided by subject teachers and not the Vice Principal.
There is no staff reward with the exception of pay for teaching staff.	As previously discussed it is a recommendation that some of the staff reward schemes, which were lost in the change of leadership, are re-instated.
Pay is used as a retention method and also utilised to enforce conformity. However a more effective method of staff retention includes building a learning culture through self-development and a realistic career management programme.	A career development programme should be initiated at the Academy which includes pathways for those wishing to improve their teaching practice, those wishing to aspire to be middle leaders, and those wishing to aspire to join the SLT. However the Academy recently begun this programme, which was initiated after the data collection of this research. It is therefore a recommendation that staff retention is reviewed following twelve months completion of this programme and any staff that do leave are debriefed as to why, and their views collated on the career development programme.
Overly generous pay can lead to teaching staff feeling trapped and stale.	Performance-related pay can be a key tool for improving employee motivation. The introduction of this at the Academy would mean staff do not feel trapped or stale and also that they have targets to aim for at the Academy. It is a recommendation that for future appointments at the Academy teaching staff pay is not quite so high and a bonus scheme is offered which is based upon performance management targets e.g. a positive residual on the data for a class or department.
For the non-teaching SMR no staff reward was identified, even fiscal. Also, as previously noted, since performance management is not utilised with non-teaching staff, they have no measurement for success.	The re-initiated staff reward schemes, which were lost in the change of leadership, should also apply to non-teaching staff. Secondly, along with the introduction of performance management for non-teaching staff, bonuses should be introduced for future non-teaching appointments.

RITUAL AND ROUTINES

Promotions were considered to be preferentially based and often pre-decided by the Principal and Vice Principal.	Staff at the Academy should not perceive appointments as being made before interviews and open competition should be promoted by the Principal at the Academy, for instance by announcing any promotion opportunities to all staff in briefing.
Promotions were perceived as a method of staff retention and could result in some staff being promoted too early. Although some stakeholders also noted that deserving staff could be promoted and this was usually based upon those willing to work hard, long hours and at the detrimental effect of their social life and family.	A balance should be struck between promoting internal staff who are perceived as effective and can continue the trend of Academy improvement, whilst also promoting external staff who will bring in new ideas and help instil cultural change and improvement.
Some differences between the politeness of the SLT and teachers were observed. This was suggested to be due to the high workloads of the SLT which can make it difficult to socialise with other staff.	The SLT should attend the termly staff social events and team building activities on staff training days, which have been previously recommended. Thus, the more improved the friendliness between the SLT and staff, the stronger the communal culture and the more effective the pursuit of Academy goals.
Areas of reduced or poor socialisation at the Academy were reported. Possible reasons for this were suggested to be due to a lack of a prominent staff room. Another strategy argued to reduce socialisation at the Academy was the rolling breaks and rolling lunches which prevents the staff body from creating too much camaraderie, as all staff are not on lunch at the same time.	The previous recommendations of staff social events and team building activities should aid socialisation, however it would also be another recommendation that the rolling lunches are reduced to one, so more staff can have lunch together in the staff room or canteen. Should this not be possible due to timetabling issues, a second recommendation would be for refreshments such as tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes to be made available in the canteen one day after school for staff to socialise together, perhaps under the guise of promoting teaching and learning strategies.
Minimal external training is offered and this was observed to be a change since becoming an Academy. If senior leaders are not receiving external training, and are therefore not up to date with current strands and initiative, this could reduce the effectiveness of the Academy's leadership team. Furthermore, a lack of external training is also considered to erode a teachers' efficacy and skill-set in the classroom.	It is therefore advised that a greater number of staff are involved with external training, for instance one strategy might be for members of the leadership team to attend external training and then they can disseminate the knowledge learnt to other stakeholders during staff training. Alternatively, if it is not possible for more staff to go on external training due to cost or exam groups, it is another recommendation that more external trainers conduct training at the Academy.

Detailed Presentation of Findings for ‘Accountabilities’

14.13 Cultural Web Element Eight – accountabilities

This element was divided into the following themes: ‘external agents’ and ‘internal agents’.

14.13.1 Theme Sixteen - external agents

The first theme of accountabilities was ‘external agents’ which relates to the organisations that the Academy is held accountable to. This was separated into the ‘fear of Ofsted’ and ‘government targets’ sub-themes.

14.13.1.1 Fear of Ofsted

Senior Leadership Team – teaching

The first reference to accountabilities was the role Ofsted, which was previously discussed in relation to school improvement under element one: ‘stories’. However, in broadening the discussion of Ofsted to focus upon accountability, this was identified by many of the teaching SLT in a number of cultural web elements. For instance one senior leader discussed the various types of Ofsted inspections that have taken place at the Academy such as the “section 8... the section 5” (I1, T, SLT). Yet in examining the accountability to Ofsted in more detail, this was often supplemented by the fear that was felt by staff at the Academy. For instance one senior leader discussed Ofsted in relation to: “...the fear that if results are poor everybody’s heads on the chop... if things go Peter Tong (wrong), Ofsted would be back in here and we would be back to square one” (I6, T, SLT).

The fear of being accountable to Ofsted was also identified as having directly altered the leadership of staff:

“...there is a certain degree of fear that if people are given freedom... it could go wrong. And if it does go wrong, the school, the institution is back up the creek that it was six or seven years ago (the ‘Notice to Improve’ from Ofsted)... so they (the staff) are micromanaged (I6, T, SLT).

Staff with Management Responsibility - teaching

The accountability to Ofsted and the impact this has had on the leadership of staff was also agreed by many of the teaching SMR, who noted it led to the previously identified autocratic leadership of the Vice Principal:

“So she’ll (the Vice Principal) take over looking after Science, and then she’ll take over looking after Maths and then take over looking after English, and take over looking after sixth form, and I think she... doesn’t want to relinquish that control and [wants to] know that everything’s going to get done” (F5, T, SMR, 2)

In summary another focus group member concluded that “the Ofsted worry” (F5, T, SMR, 1) had been a significant driver for the senior leadership team and consequently this “underpins everything” (F5, T, SMR, 2) that happens at the Academy.

14.13.1.2 Government Targets

All Staff

Another accountability factor identified for the Academy was ‘government targets’ which were discussed by some of the SLT, SMR and SNR. For instance the SMR discussed the increased monitoring by the government which filters down to all staff.

“Because from government there’s a greater expectation of what schools are expected to achieve now. They’re monitored much more closely than they were even five years ago. Ok, so that expectation of government goes down to the senior managers of the school which cascades then down, doesn’t it, to the teachers?” (F2, T, SMR, 4).

This was also noted to cause issues with the Academy pre-empting government change, which could lead to excessive and unnecessary work.

“Whatever the government wants to do they will pre-empt it, put it in a year before it needs to be done so they’ll be ready for it when it comes along. I don’t know, I just think historically we’ve seen that the government does so much stuff and then it just gets scrapped the next year and then it’s swapped around. I just think we can’t possibly do everything that they advise doing, but we seem to try” (F3, T, SMR, 1).

Elaboration for the increased focus of the school on governmental targets was provided by one SMR who considered “the success of the Academy in the league tables... seems to have stemmed from the Notice to Improve (Ofsted grading) the school was given” (Q21, T, SNR). However one SLT concluded that “every school does this system [of focusing on government targets] because it is a case of league tables and... everyone is accountable for what they do” (I11, T, SLT).

14.13.2 Theme Seventeen – internal agents

The second theme of accountabilities was ‘internal agents’ which relates to the stakeholders that Academy staff are held accountable to. This was separated into the ‘monitoring by superiors’ and the ‘monitoring by the sponsor’.

14.13.2.1 Monitoring by Superiors

All Staff - teaching

The accountability of staff to managers and senior leaders was discussed by many of the SLT, SMR and some of the SNR. For instance one manager discussed reporting to superiors in line management meetings “every two weeks” (F2, T, SMR, 4). This was continued in another focus group who noted that the numerous meetings and constant monitoring at the Academy meant “you can’t make a decision” (F4, T, SMR, 2). One specific example of decisions being enforced by SLT line managers is provided by a SMR below, who was made to set students a mock exam when they had only learnt half the contents of the paper.

“I just think it is a joke that I am giving some year 12 kids, who worked really hard, I am going to give them a [mock] paper and they have learnt half of it. They get every single mark I have taught them [and] they will get 36 out of 70. I looked at the paper [and] that is dead on a grade ‘E’. I am meant to be telling my students ‘Oh you got an ‘E’ but well done.’ I just think it is pathetic and she said (the SLT line manager), ‘Well last year people were getting A’s and B’s in mocks and then got C’s and D’s in the real thing.’ I said, ‘Well obviously you just don’t trust me as a teacher then.’ And I walked out of the room and she hasn’t really spoken to me since” (F4, T, SMR, 1).

This link between the monitoring of staff due to a lack of trust was agreed by one senior leader who noted:

“If you’re a manager you, you need to trust the people you work with and trust that they know what they are talking about and respect them as professionals. And often the level of micromanagement reflects a lack of trust. I don’t know if it is a total lack of trust but it reflects a lack of trust. And often managers just become doers, conveyers of information, followers of instructions” (I6, T, SLT).

Another form of ‘monitoring by superiors’ was the entrance of the Academy. This was noted as being used by some SLT, who have offices there, as a surveillance tool: “Nigel (the Principal) has said to me before ‘I know who leaves at ten past three because I see them walk past the window’” (I4, T, SLT). Whilst a final form of monitoring from superiors was the performance management system which has been previously discussed in ‘control systems’. Performance management was highlighted by SNR as being concerned with “ensuring we (the staff) are monitored” (Q32, T, SNR) because “the Academy wants to make you accountable” (Q9, T, SNR). This was agreed by one senior leader who concluded the system is excessive and more about the monitoring of staff for efficacy rather than being developmental:

“...we do far more internal monitoring than is legal and ...when I walk in a form time and say it’s just a learning walk, that counts as one of their statutory observations a year...When I go round do I want to make my form tutors better form tutors or if I observe someone teaching and what’s the motive behind that? Why am I doing that? Are... we just measuring them as part of a machine for their effectiveness and their

efficiency? And if they're not effective... is it developmental or is it judgemental and actually, prior to now, it's been pretty much the latter... you know it's actually sort of very kind of big brotherish" (I2, T, SLT).

14.13.2.2 Monitoring by the Sponsor

All Staff

The final form of accountability at the Academy was the 'monitoring by the sponsor' which was discussed by some of the SMR, SLT and SNR. Initially one SMR noted that at the time of the Academy conversion there was "a fear" (F5, T, SMR, 4) about the main sponsor and their role. However, upon academisation some SNR considered this fear as having transformed into a desire to "do things to please the main sponsor" (Q45, NT, SNR) and to follow their "the steps and expectations" (Q17, T, SNR). This was further explored by one senior leader, who noted that it was considered important for the Academy to conform to the brand of the sponsor and promote academic excellence:

"... a lot of people buy into the fact that this school is a grammar school and part of the main sponsor's brand... a lot of people are consciously making decisions based around the fact that they believe that this school is a main sponsor school... That we have a certain value set; that we have a certain academic credential" (I6, T, SLT).

However one SNR expressed reservations in conforming to some aspects of the culture of the main sponsor. "Becoming part of the main sponsor has given us a platform. But our culture is not that of other schools from the main sponsor, nor should we be looking to be like them, other than to match their educational achievements" (Q45, NT, SNR).

Some examples of ways the sponsor was considered to monitor, that the Academy is conforming to their expectation, was through events such as awards evenings:

“SMR 1: ...the drama for the Key Stage 4 Award Evening, because the people were coming from the other main sponsor schools. They were taking year 11 kids out of our lessons, that they’d still not done the exam for, to go and practice in the hall and it was so ridiculous.

SMR 5: I don’t know why they were practicing. They were practicing going on stage and then going to sit down again. Weren’t they?” (F2, T, SMR, 1&5).

This monitoring was agreed in another focus group, who noted it causes the Principal to appear nervous at events the main sponsor is present at:

“...when we have those dos and those events, and Nigel stands at the front... to start off with I was quite bothered by the fact that Nigel seemed nervous because I kept on thinking, ‘We’re as good as them. We might be different but we’re as good as them’. So I don’t think we should try and be like the rest of them” (F5, T, SMR, 4).

Further monitoring of the sponsor was discussed by the SLT. For instance one senior leader noted “the main sponsor has taken a much more active role in appointments; the chair of the sponsor will want to be part of the appointment process for any senior leader” (I1, T, SLT).

In evaluating the role of the main sponsor, one member of the SLT expressed a certain relief that the sponsor of the Academy is from an educational context and therefore has merit:

“I’m pleased it was the sponsor that took us over at the end day because they have dealt in education. We did have members of staff, who although were going said it could have quite easily been a pet store that was our sponsor or an organisation that didn’t, weren’t necessarily involved in education. So I think the sponsors, in the long run, as the years have gone, it probably been quite a positive thing in many ways. Probably could be more positive” (I3, T, SLT).

This was agreed by another senior leader who concluded “it’s turned out it hasn’t been too bad. The main sponsor, in terms of sponsors, aren’t been bad” (I1, T, SLT).